August 2016

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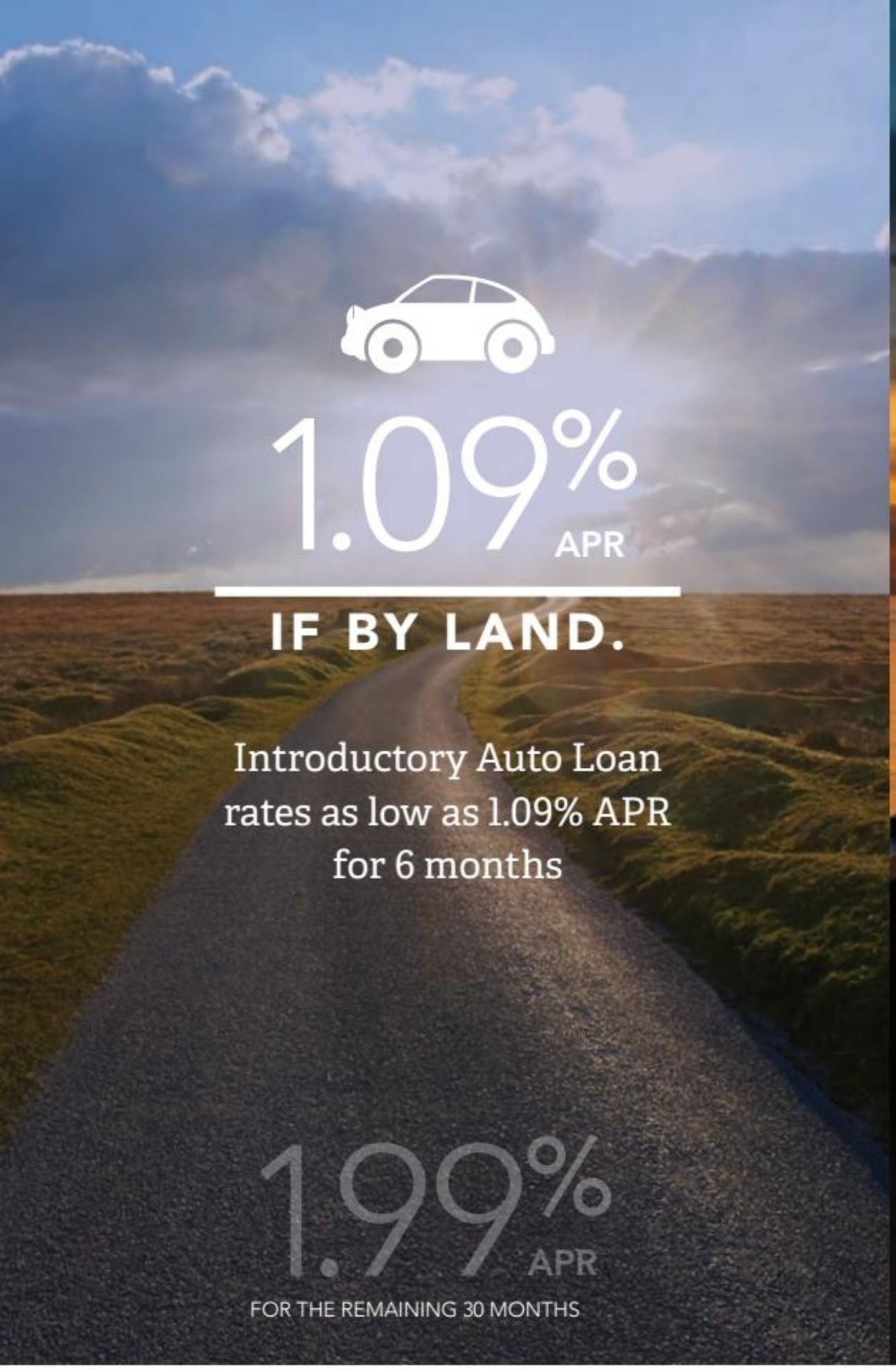

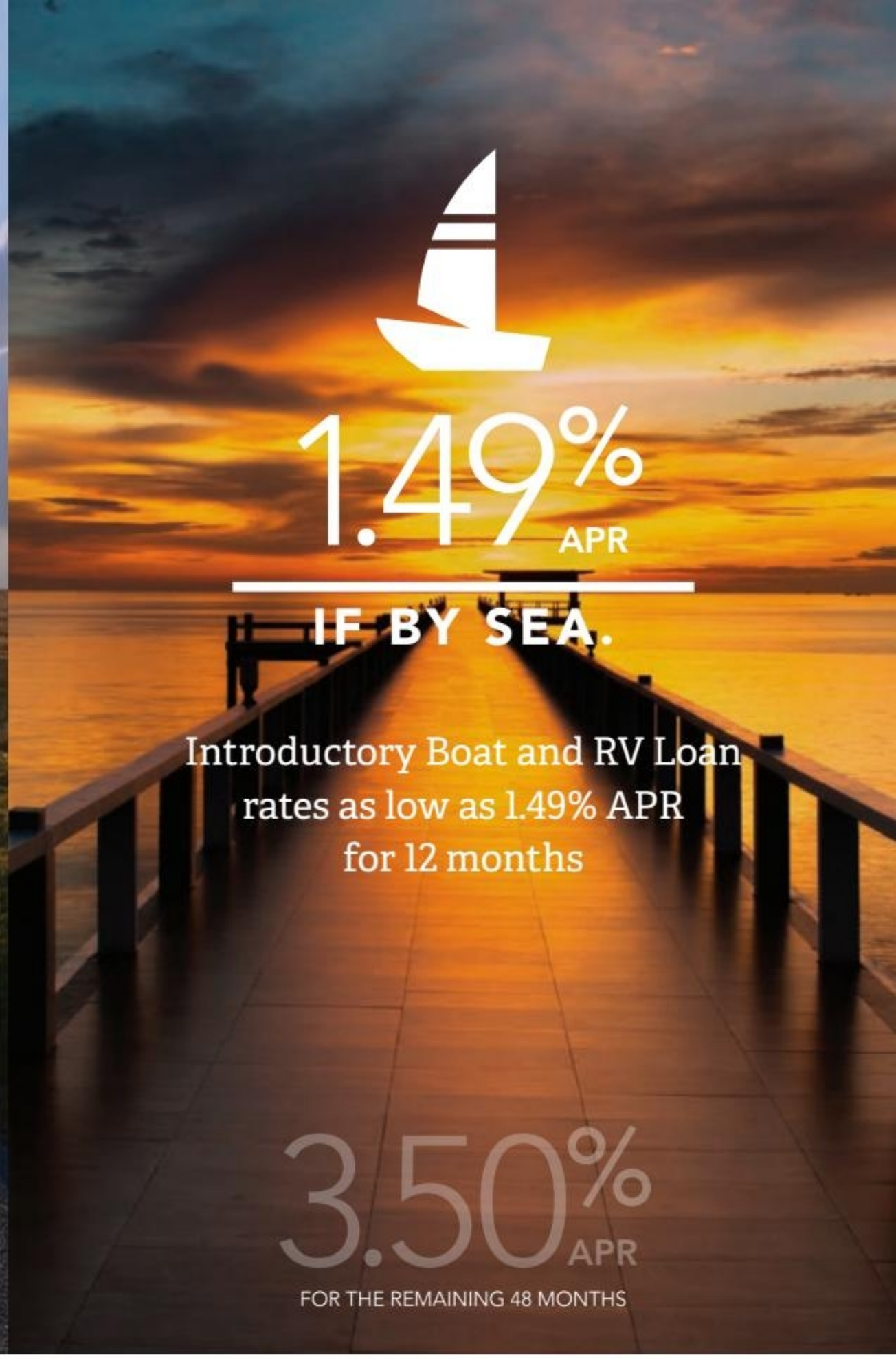

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August 2016

Features

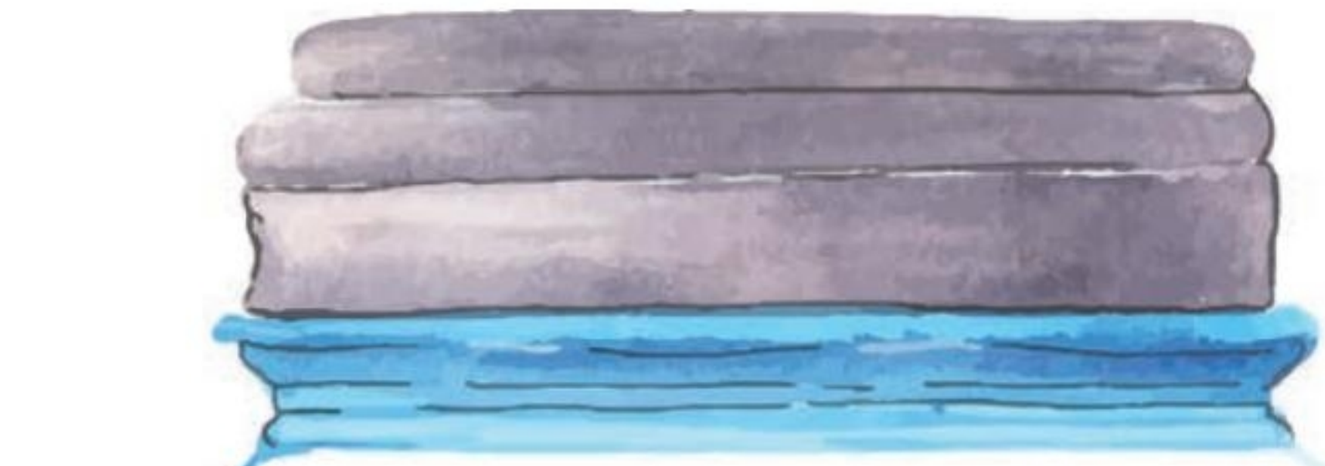
41 When Honeybees Were Everywhere
Poetry by Terri Kirby Erickson

42 Summer Postcards from The Edge
Ten photographers, ten original stories . . . our edgy Summer reading offerings

54 Old Sol and Johnny Sunflower Seed
By Ross Howell Jr.
One man's love affair with summer's essential flower

56 Falling for Bald Head
By Anne Barnhill
How Wilmington designer Nancy Mullineaux infused an existing beach house with joie d'vivre

63 Almanac
By Ash Alder
Lammas, sword lilies and magical peaches



Departments

9 Simple Life
By Jim Dodson

12 SaltWorks

15 Instagram

17 Sketchbook
By Isabel Zermani

19 Omnivorous Reader
By Gwenyfar Rohler

21 Great Chefs of the Cape Fear
By Jason Frye

27 Lunch With a Friend
By Dana Sachs

31 Vine Wisdom
By Robyn James

32 Salty Words
By Gwenyfar Rohler

34 Port City Journal
By Anne Barnhill

37 Birdwatch
By Susan Campbell

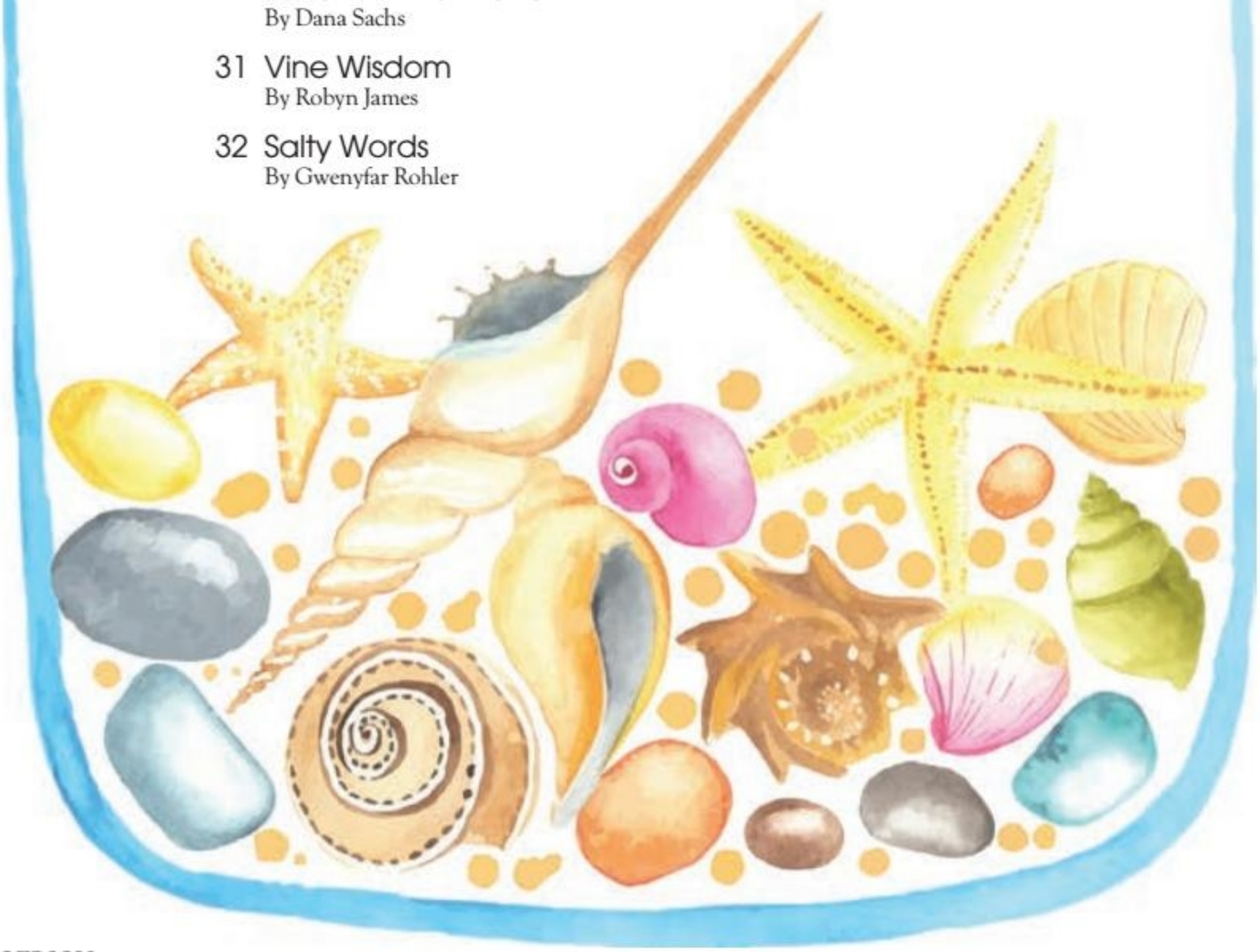
39 Excursions
By Virginia Holman

64 Calendar

73 Port City People
Out and about

79 Accidental Astrologer
By Astrid Stellanova

80 Papadaddy's Mindfield
By Clyde Edgerton



COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURA GINGERICH

Embark on a new adventure

Life takes on a warmer hue in RiverLights — opening soon in Wilmington, N.C., along the banks of the Cape Fear River.
Summer pre-sales are in full swing, with model homes opening in late 2016.

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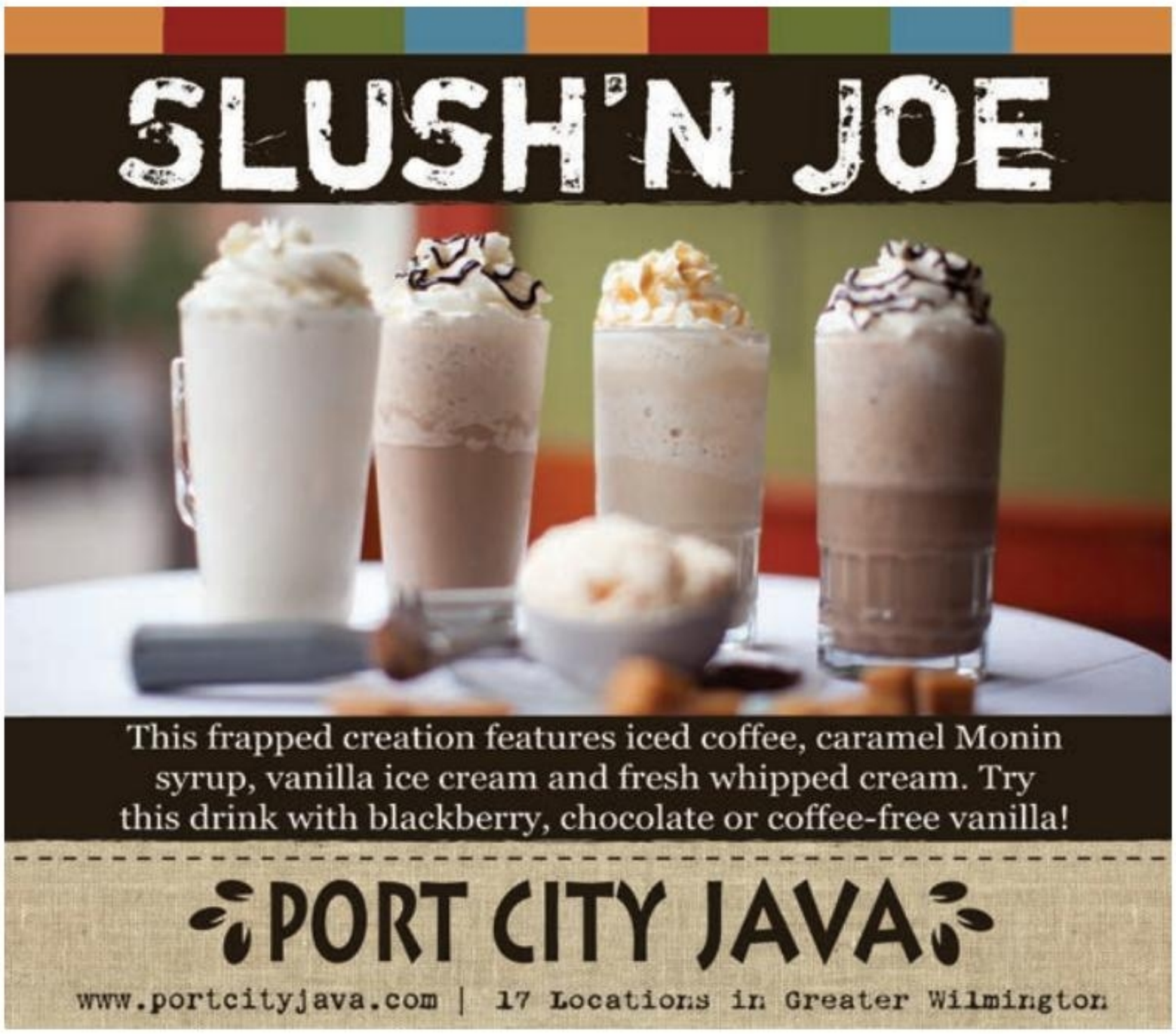
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2204 Masons Point Place - $849,000 - Landfall

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- 4412 Sq Ft
- Marsh & golf views
- Great open floorplan

8916 Woodcreek Cir. - $535,000 - Porters Neck

- 3 Beds/3 Baths
- 2773 sq. ft.
- Low maintenance
- Views of 15th fairway

1113 Arboretum Drive - $680,000 - Landfall

- 4 Beds/3 Baths
- 3035 Sq Ft
- Open floorplan
- Home office

2172 Deer Island Lane - $769,900 - Landfall

- 6 Beds/4 Baths
- 3677 Sq Ft
- Gourmet kitchen
- Screened in porch

2120 Scotts Hill Loop Rd.- $999,000- Pender

- 3 Beds/3 Baths
- 2228 Sq Ft
- Low Pender taxes
- ICW front

100 Edgewater Ln - $1,250,000 - Airlie

- 5 Beds/5 Full 2 Half
- 6725 Sq Ft
- 32' boatslip
- Theater Room

5335 Andover Rd - $219,500 - Green Acres

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- 1630 Sq Ft
- Desirable location
- Large covered deck

1904 Edgemont Ln - $499,000 - Landfall

- 3 Beds/3 Baths
- 2647 Sq Ft
- Large bonus room
- Low maintenance

Gone Fishin'

By Jim Dodson

As you read this, I'm sitting by a trout stream in an undisclosed location somewhere deep in the North Carolina mountains. If I was wrapped in hickory smoked bacon, Lassie probably couldn't find me.

But fear not, friends, I've left behind a few well-chosen words from my dear old friend Ogden Nash, who always has something timely to say.

To Donald on his way to Cleveland:

Love is a word that is constantly heard,
Hate is a word that's not.
Love, I'm told, is more precious than gold,
Love, I have read, is hot.
But hate is the verb that to me is superb,
And love is a drug on the mart.
Any kiddie in school can love like a fool,
But hating, my boy, is an art.

*

The danger of a hole in the porch screen:

God in his wisdom made the fly
And then forgot to tell us why.

*

An ode to poison ivy:

One bliss for which there is no match,
Is, when you itch,
To up and scratch.

*

Song of the Interstate:

I think I shall never see
A billboard lovely as a tree.
Indeed, unless the billboards fall
I'll never see a tree at all.

*

Wish you weren't here:

Some hate broccoli, some hate bacon,
Some hate having their picture taken.
How can your family claim to love you
And then demand a picture of you?

*

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To the family at the start of the week:

How pleasant to sit on the beach
On the beach, on the sand, in the sun
With ocean galore within reach,
And nothing at all to be done!
No letters to answer,
No bills to be burned,
No work to be shirked,
No cash to be earned.
It is pleasant to sit on the beach,
With nothing at all to be done.

To the same family at the end of the week:

One would be in less danger
From the wiles of the stranger
If one's own kin and kith
Were more fun to be with.

And finally, a few original Ogden-inspired lines jotted down by a pristine stream where the trout are laughing at my hand-made flies:

A gal at the beach paints her toes,
To catch the attention of beaus;
But a guy at the beach will just scratch his feet,
And wonder if anything good's left to eat.

Gardener's lament:

To a gardener in the heat of late summer,
Oh, my, what a seasonal bummer,
With hydrangeas so wilted, you feel almost jilted,
It's a wonder you bother to rose.

Politics as use-you-all:

I suppose I'm the Average American,
Tho I can't say just how the hellican,
Vote for these two, either one of which who
Make me wish I was just a mere skeleton.

A brief escape:

So here I sit by a stream,
Dreaming the American dream,
I might not come home, just pick up and roam,
At least till I find some ice cream.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.

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SaltWorks

Know Thyself!

Seventeenth century poet Jean de La Fontaine once said, "A person often meets his destiny on the road he took to avoid it." The authors featured in this year's *Thirsty Tome – Celebrating the Craft of Memoir* at UNCW's Randall Library know all about chance encounters and the road to oneself.

May-lee Chai will read from *Hapa Girl: A Memoir* (Temple University Press, 2008), which follows her young life moving from Southern California to New York to South Dakota, where her family encountered escalating racial tension and animosity. "Chai's memoir ends in China, where she arrives just in time to witness a riot . . . Here, she realizes that the rural Americans' 'fears . . . were the same as China's. And I realized, finally, that it had not been my fault.'"

Garrard Conley will read from his debut memoir, *Boy Erased* (Riverhead, 2016). Conley, once an MFA student at UNCW, writes about his identity as a young gay man growing up in small-town Arkansas, torn by his sexuality, his family and his faith. At 19 years old he agreed to attend a church-supported conversion program to "cure" him. Through a "harrowing and brutal journey," Conley emerges triumphant with the courage to pursue the search for his true self.

Salt columnist Dana Sachs will read from *The House On Dream Street: Memoir of an American Woman in Vietnam* (Algonquin Books, 2000) about her two years living in Hanoi, growing to "know her own heart," and gaining a different perspective on the American legacy in Vietnam.

Peter Selgin's will read from his new book, *The Inventors* (Hawthorne Books, 2016), about coming of age under the tutelage of a passionate teacher and, conversely, a successful but "emotionally remote" inventor father. "The author uncovers the truth — about both men, and about himself."

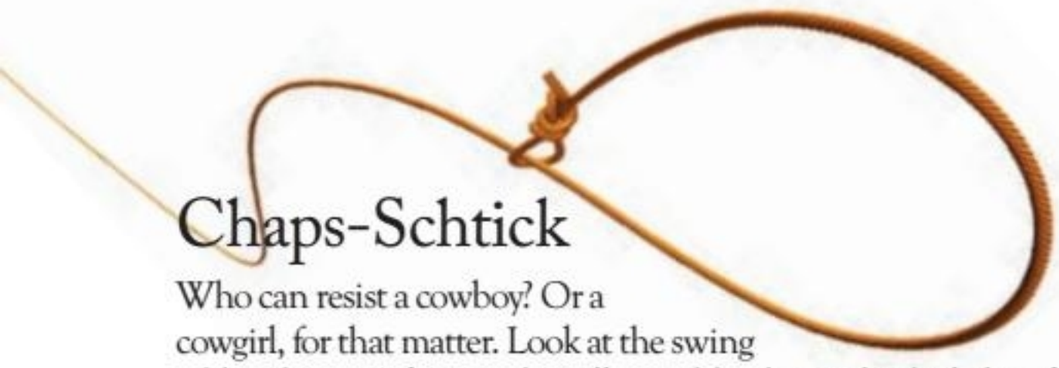
Thursday, August 25, 6–8 p.m. in the Sherman Hayes Gallery on Randall Library's first floor at UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: library.uncw.edu

Meta-More Flutter Bys

Fill your mind with sea creatures and then take to the skies with the *Butterfly Bungalow* exhibit at NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Stroll through an outdoor native butterfly garden and meet the local winged creatures, then step into a bungalow with hundreds of exotic beauties from Asia, Africa, South and Central America. Think flowery thoughts and they may land on you. Butterflies are notorious flirts and important pollinators. Learn about conservation efforts and see each stage of butterfly metamorphosis through the viewing window. New butterflies emerge weekly, but this exhibit closes in September; float on down! Info: Museum hours: 9a.m.–5p.m., open daily. Admission to the Butterfly Bungalow: $3. Admission to the NC Aquarium: adults, $12.95, seniors/military, $11.95, children, $10.95, children under age 2 enter for free. 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Call (910) 722-0500 or visit ncaquarium.com/fort-fisher

Meet the Farmers

Which came first, the chicken, the egg or the food truck? I suppose the answer is whoever sets up earliest at the Poplar Grove Farmers Market. Foodies looking for that ripe, right-off-the-vine vegetable experience or a sampling of the area's finest organic, sustainable, homegrown meats, or handmade body products, crafts and jewelry will be thrilled to learn a weekly "Gourmet in the Grove" evening market has opened up in addition to the morning market. Evening shoppers enjoy free entry into the first floor of the historic Manor House. On the National Register of Historic Places, Poplar Grove Plantation allows visitors to learn about the Gullah Geechee Corridor and the Foy family. Daytime visitors may also enjoy the walking trails through the forests behind the Manor House through the Abbey Nature Preserve. On Thursday, August 18, evening visitors can partake in "Moonlight in the Manor," a paranormal tour through the manor, courtyard and (gulp) cemetery. BYO flashlight. Paranormal Tour Tickets: $15, Farmers Markets are free. Info: Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Call (910) 686-9518 or visit poplargrove.org



Chaps-Schtick

Who can resist a cowboy? Or a cowgirl, for that matter. Look at the swing of that fringe and count the gallons of that hat. Take the beloved cowboy Will Rogers, now set his life story to music, add dancing girls — more sequins! more rope tricks! That's the ticket. Operahouse Theatre Company presents *The Will Rogers Follies* at Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street. Info: Tickets: $32. Call (910) 632-2285 or visit thalianhall.org. The show runs August 3–21 with evening shows at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 3 p.m. Check website for specific dates.

I Don't Like it, I Lovett

Although it's not recommended to mess with Texas, we'd like to tussle with Lyle Lovett and his Large Band. Maybe it's that tuft of tousled hair or the fourteen albums the sing-songwriter has recorded, the Grammys he's won, or that he was once married to Julia Roberts, but we'd like a piece of that man. Just like any good country song about a man you can't stand because you can't stop loving — well, hell — let's keep on loving him and go see his band. Info: Huka Entertainment presents Lyle Lovett and his Large Band on Monday, August 15, at CFCC's Wilson Center, 703 North Third Street, Wilmington. Tickets: $50.50–105.50, Call (910) 362-7999 or visit capefearstage.com.

Get Your Gallery Walk On

It's much too hot to exercise, so if you must, take yourself on a self-guided walking tour of the arts downtown on the last Friday evening of the month. Be sure to make plenty of stops to see all the art and start early if you want free wine. It's a choose-your-own art-venture, Pokemon Go for adults, a moving salon of intellectuals and artists of all kinds — call it what you will, it is Wilmington's most fun night out for art enthusiasts. We are intrigued by EXPO 216's "Ocean Plastic" exhibit (216 North Front Street), the retrospective of Marvin Saltzman at CFCC's Wilma Daniels Gallery (200 Hanover Street), and we always peek into the open studios at Acme Arts Studio (711 N. Fourth Street). Info: 6–9 p.m., Friday, August 26, coordinated by the Arts Council of Wilmington, (910) 343-0998. Gallery locations vary. Get the full list of open galleries and addresses online at artscouncilofwilmington.org (click the tab Fourth Friday). Can't wait? Many galleries have regular daytime hours, too.

Dazed and Amused

Do you long for the Big Band days with swinging skirts and snappy zoot suits? Well, dust off your dance card; Wrightsville Beach Museum of History presents *Lumina Daze*, an oceanside dance and fundraiser under the stars. It's sure to transport you to an era when Lumnia Avenue had dance halls aplenty. Featuring live music by Wilmington Big Band, Dixieland All-Stars and The Imitations, it's going to be hard to resist that dance floor. Wallflowers can enjoy live and silent auctions as well as presentations of Wrightsville Beach history. It's not too late for a summer romance! Info: Sunday, August 28, 5–9 p.m. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Tickets: $20 Call (910) 256-2569 or visit wbmuseumofhistory.com.

Book-Ish

Take the definition of book — better yet, take an actual book — and warp it into something so magnificent that you forget what reading even means. Lovers of the written word may delight or cringe at the sadism performed on these folios: Comic books get 3-D courtesy of an X-acto knife, long accordion books spaghetti around rocks, ragged mountains carved into a book's edge form a poetic topography . . . the nine contemporary artists in the Cameron Art Museum's new exhibition *Unbound Narrative* will alter your definitions and probably an actual dictionary. The exhibition features work by James Allen, Doug Beube, Andrew Hayes, Guy Laramée, Math Monahan, Tom Philips, Susan Porteous, Diana Fonseca Quiñones, and Tim Rollins and K.O.S. Info: The exhibition runs August 13–January 15 at the Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South 17th Street, Wilmington, (910) 395-5999, or visit cameronartmuseum.org.

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The Spirit of Belle Boyd

By Isabel Zermani

Oh, dear reader, how do I say a proper hello? At my last writing for *Salt*, I was saying goodbye — a short-lived goodbye — to Wilmington. How funny that I should be back saying hello. That's the thing about a port city, people always coming, going.

More important, how will I show you all the things I wish to at once? Impossible. But I will try. Some things will be remarkable. Some will not. It will be like a viewfinder of vacation slides — click — Paris — click — Beijing — except more like — click — unexplainable shoes — click — historical tidbit — click — painting of an ice cream. See? You'll catch on.

I hope that you will. I know you think you've lost your Front Street Spy, but just like the column's namesake, Confederate spy Rose O'Neal Greenhow, spies ferret in networks. There's a term, "brush contact," for when two agents meet briefly. We only *look* like two ships passing in the night. My predecessor was your Wild Rose. Consider me your Belle Boyd.

Maria Isabella "Belle" Boyd was as Wild West as the any of the lady spies of her day, and we actually have quite a bit in common. She was from Virginia. So am I. She was an excellent conversationalist (see "flirt"). Guilty. She likes her hair unmanageably long. As do I. She shot a man when she was 18 years old for being rude. I did not do this, but I did write a country song about this very thing after an unpleasant cat-calling experience in Memphisn, Tennessee; it started off, "I'm twenty-one / woo! / with fire hair and porcelain skin . . ." The refrain went "Look out boys on Beale Street / here I come." I digress.

Belle passed through Wilmington on a win. She is rumored to have delivered key information that led to Jackson's recapturing Front Royal. Sure, she'd done some prison time, was a Confederate courier for a losing war and had been banished to the South, but you know what they say about counting your blessings. It was May 1864, and I bet she stayed at a fancy inn downtown with blooming azaleas — perhaps strolling by the historic house I would come to live in — before stepping off the dock into a new adventure. This boat ride ushered in a marriage, a memoir and an acting career. (So far Wilmington has blessed me with two out of three, but I'm still waiting on the trifecta.)

Like Rose Greenhow's, Belle's boat was also intercepted by the Union Army. Only a few months later (October 1864) Rose famously met her tragic end when her escape-dinghy capsized and she drowned in the Cape Fear River — as legend says — held down by the gold coins (fruits of her memoir) sewn into her skirts. When the Union Navy stormed her ship, however, Belle — ever the actress — managed to avoid both death and imprisonment by sweet-talking a Yankee soldier. Stockholm syndrome or not, they married and stayed together a few years abroad. She married twice more. After penning her memoir, she came back to America and took to the stage in earnest to support her children. The Siren of the Shenandoah laughed at the easy life.

She even died onstage. This time moth-not-bullet holes in her crinoline.

If I turn out half that interesting, it will be well worth reading my column. Plus, if we've learned anything from Wild Rose, it's to let go of the past, even if it was rich like gold.

Isabel Zermani, our senior editor, prefers the storied life.

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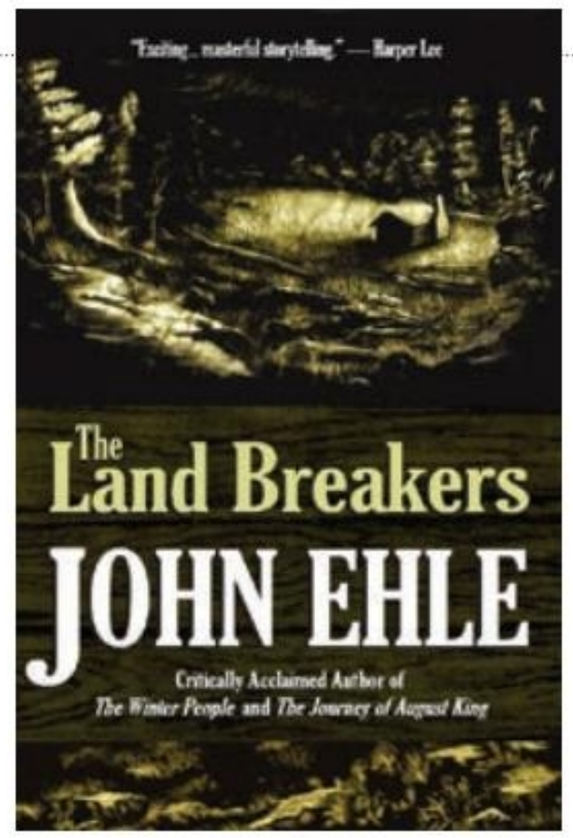
Rediscovering a North Carolina Treasure

The works of John Ehle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The
Land Breakers
JOHN EHLE
Critically Acclaimed Author of
The Winter People and The Journey of August King

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"We're bringing John Ehle's books back into print," explained Kevin Morgan Watson, gesturing to Press 53's display at the North Carolina Writer's Conference. I nodded knowingly and inwardly hoped that my confusion didn't show on my face. I was too embarrassed to admit that I wasn't familiar with John Ehle or his work. To remedy my chagrin, I sought out Ehle's *The Land Breakers*, and I was stunned that it had taken me until the age of 36 to discover his work.

The Land Breakers begins Ehle's seven-book series exploring the settlement and development of the Appalachian Mountains in North Carolina. It opens in 1779 and primarily traces the journey of Mooney Wright, a Scots-Irish orphan who has recently completed his indentured servitude in the New World. Wright buys a piece of land, 640 acres of good, "bottom land." When he and his young wife finally arrive after a perilous journey to this promised, much-dreamed-of prize, Ehle captures their rapturous disbelief and elation with honest realism. Reading it doesn't so much remind one of being young, in love and filled with dreams and wonder, but actually takes one back to inhabiting that space in a way few writers can.

Ehle's family history on his mother's side can be traced to one of the first three families to settle Appalachian North Carolina, the frontier that *The Land Breakers* and its six companion novels chronicle. Throughout his adult life, he continued to live in the western part of the state (when not in New York or London for his wife, Rosemary Harris', acting career), with homes near both Penland and Winston-Salem. From his author's bio: "His interest in the folkways of the past . . . is an interest in the present, in where we are all going, what we are leaving, and what we will need to find replacements for." Perhaps that is part of what makes *The Land Breakers* so compelling. On the surface, it appears to be a book about man versus nature and the insurmountable opportunities around him, but it is so much more.

In *The Land Breakers*, as each new family moves into the valley Mooney Wright has settled, Ehle introduces their strengths and weaknesses and the impact they will each have on the collective survival of the settlement. None of the characters are merely two-dimensional parodies of an idea; rather, they are all flawed yet desirable human beings struggling with their own mortality against a wilderness far more powerful than they are. The journey the characters make toward understanding what is essential for their survival and success is so captivating I could not put the book down. Ehle explores both life's beauty and horror. Spoiler alert! The scene involving the snake attacks at night might be the most frightening three pages I have read in years. Forget the bogeyman and the phantoms of Stephen King—these snakes left me white-knuckled and twitching.

In 1967, John Ehle married Tony Award–winning English actress Rosemary Harris. With a film résumé that includes *Beau Brummell*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, George Sand in *Notorious Woman*, Desdemona in *Othello*, *Tom & Viv*, and even *Spider-Man*, Harris has a career of legend built on a solid foundation of craft. Perhaps inspired partly by witnessing Harris' film experiences, in 1974 Ehle released *The Changing of the Guard*, a book that chronicles the production of a big-budget biopic of Louis XVI. Were it not for the intensity of the writing and skillful use of metaphor that slowly overtakes the action of the book, it would be hard to believe the same man wrote both novels.

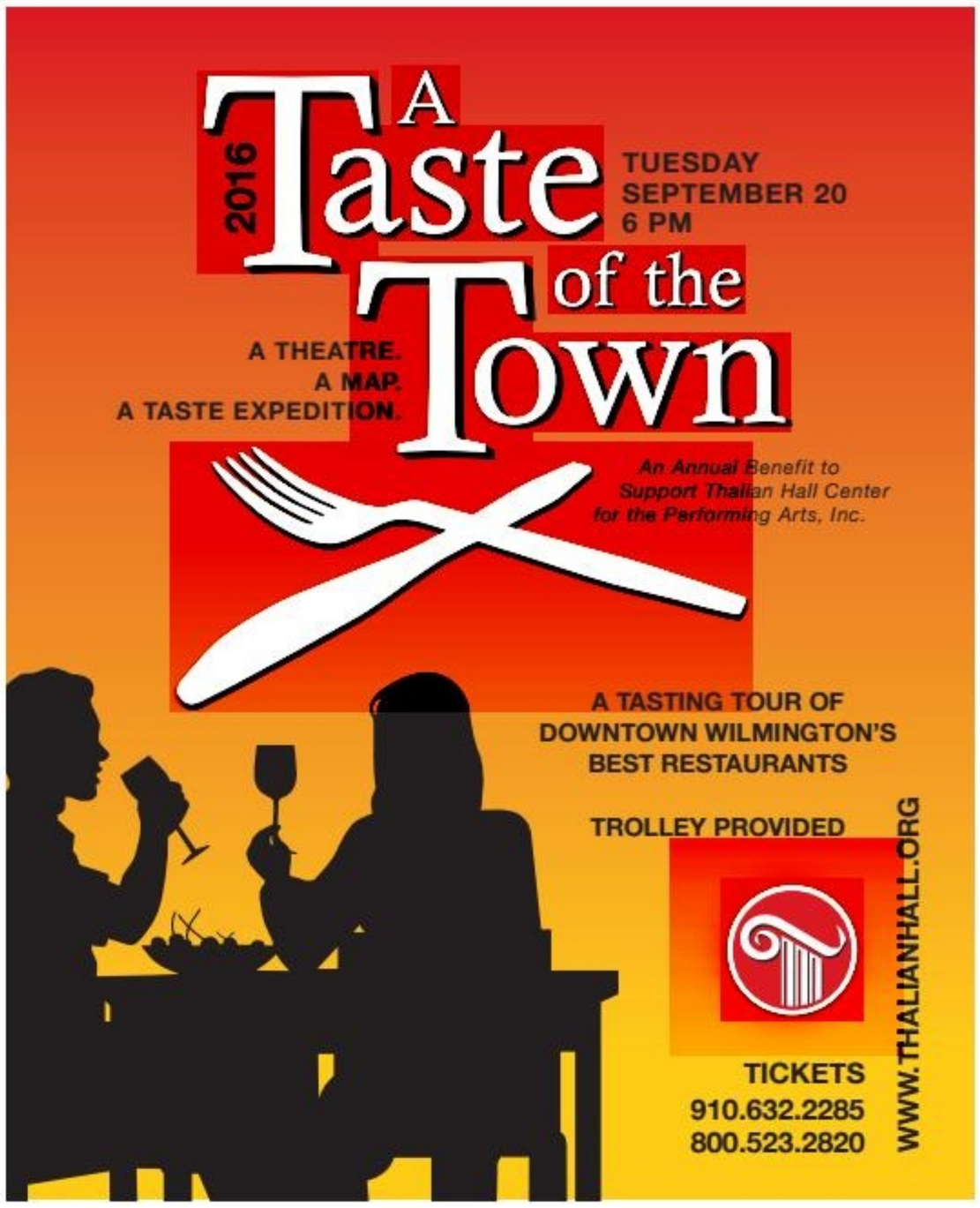
The Changing of the Guard is a prismatic display of storytelling. On the surface it tells the story of an aging British actor who sees himself as a contemporary of Richard Burton and Laurence Olivier, making his last big picture: a beautiful, sweeping costume drama of the last days of Louis XVI during the French Revolution. His real-life wife is cast to play his mistress, and her best friend is to be Marie Antoinette. From the outset the power struggle appears to be between the actor and the brash young director that the studio insisted upon. But slowly, the book evolves into Ehle's retelling of the private life of Louis during the revolution, serving as both a metaphor for the war waged on set and the changes in the actor's private life. The line between art and reality is crossed so frequently and subtly—almost a form of magical realism—that, in the hands of a lesser writer, the story line and conceit would be hokey and hard to follow. But from Ehle's pen, it is completely believable. The part that makes the book painful to stomach is the needless human cruelty we are capable of inflicting upon each other—which Ehle demonstrates in broad strokes through the French Revolution and very pointedly with exquisite, tearing saber thrusts in the personal interactions between the actors and director.

Where *The Land Breakers* is about man versus nature and forces greater than man could comprehend, *The Changing of the Guard* takes on the inevitable autumn of life that comes to all of us and the painful battle with a world that no longer needs us. At their core both books explore the experience of giving yourself wholly to something bigger, greater than yourself. Be it art or the development of a farm, both are about legacies and leaving some sign that you passed through this world.

Similarly, Kevin Morgan Watson has dedicated himself to the enterprise of publishing and creating an outlet for work he believes in (and I am forever grateful to him for bringing Ehle's books back into print). Ehle manages to look at very specific stories: the settlement and growth of the Appalachians, the transition in the film world from beautiful, bright costume dramas with stylized performances to dark, realistic depictions of life before electricity, a world of people who talk to each other like real people instead of caricatures. Ehle finds the universal struggle that speaks to readers, even if you have never built a log cabin or operated a guillotine.

Many people are preoccupied with their legacy; few people understand that legacy is something we begin creating every morning when we wake up, before we understand our own mortality. Perhaps Mooney Wright put it best: "A person becomes part of what he does . . . grows into what grows around him, and if he works the land, he comes to be the land, an owner of and slave to it."

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.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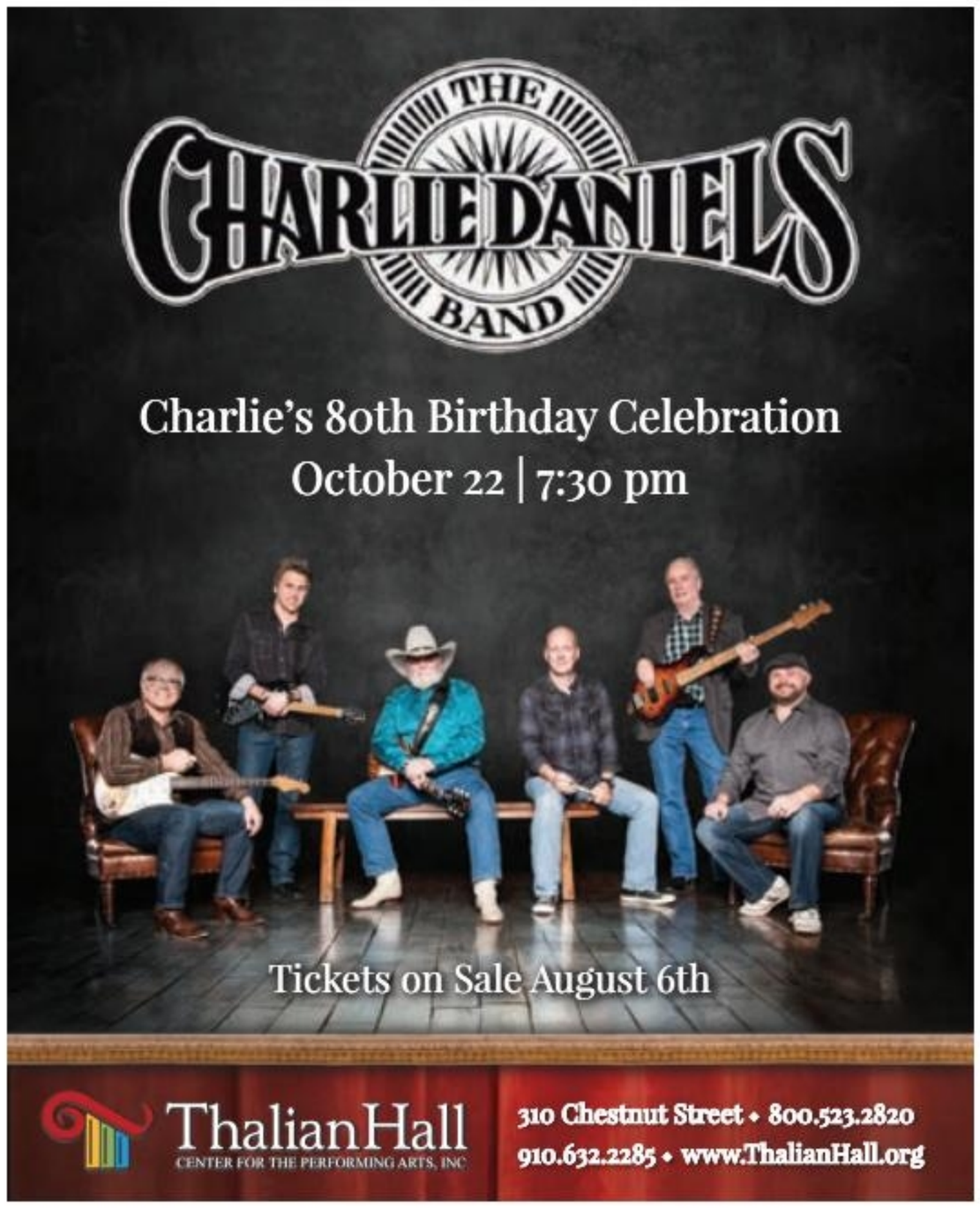
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Food for Thought

The rise of 40 Eats

By Jason Frye

Flyover State

Somehow Wilmington — dangling on the eastern terminus of I-40 like the last grape on the vine — has become a sort of Flyover State. In the culinary sense.

We get visitors in droves who come for the beach and battleship and blackwater creeks, the aquarium and the Azalea Festival. When they come, they dine at chain restaurants that might as well serve the SYSCO Summer Menu, supping on shrimp imported from Thailand and sea bass "fresh" from South America instead of dining on seafood caught offshore just this morning, served with sides harvested yesterday on a farm thirty miles from the dinner table.

In that way, we're a culinary flyover. Or maybe it's a culinary no-fly zone. Either way, it's you, dear reader, who is the exception. You're part of the slice of Wilmington that gets it, that frequents the restaurants who know their farmers and fishermen, that dines for sustenance of self and community. You spend your money on dishes from chefs who give a damn, who cook with food provided by men and women who give a damn, men and women who work in the fields and boats and greenhouses to deliver ingredients flavored with a passion so deep there's nothing more in this world they want to do but grow, harvest, fish, haul lines and empty crab pots.

A new group — a supergroup, if you will — has plans to change the way we, residents and visitors alike, experience food in Wilmington. Started by a core of chefs, 40 Eats is going to take over Wilmington one plate at a time.

Coup d'table

OK, so 40 Eats won't be so dramatic as to start a coup d'état, but they will elevate and invigorate the farm-to-table dining culture of our region. It will take time and effort, but the results will be this: Wilmingtonians will frequent 40 Eats member restaurants because those restaurants support local farmers and fishermen. Wilmingtonians will rave about their dinners to anyone who will listen. Visitors will catch on and soon there will be a line at manna, at Catch, at PinPoint and at every 40 Eats restaurant the likes of which you only see at Britt's Donuts on opening day.

40 Eats. It's a play on words, but you see that. 40 Eats. 40 East. Get it?

Started this year by Billy Mellon (manna), Keith Rhodes (Catch), Dean Neff (PinPoint), James Doss (Rx and Pembroke's), Tommy Mills (Little Pond Catering) and Anne Steketee and Shawn Wellersdick (Port Land Grille), 40 Eats has a simple mission: to enhance Wilmington's culinary scene. By pooling resources, contacts and strengths, the collective — which is still growing — will spread the word of our community and dining scene far and wide.

But there are some immediate benefits.

"A natural offshoot of coming together is buying power," says Billy Mellon. "It's cheaper to buy a whole animal than individual cuts, [but] that's too much for most of us to handle. Now we have a formal network, a real way to say, 'Hey, Dean, we're buying half a cow, you want in?' or 'Keith, we can get these great clams but we have to buy 1,000, can you use any?' Buying like this gives us access to superior products and better pricing, so it's good for the diners, and it's good for business."

Wear That ILM T-Shirt

"This is about community pride. Look at a city like Charleston. They project community pride in everything from their history to their restaurants," says Keith Rhodes.

It's more than rhetoric for Charleston or Asheville or Greenville, South Carolina, or Durham; it goes beyond simply saying, "I'm proud to be from here." It reaches a depth of pride where everyone becomes involved and invested, even in the smallest of ways.

Charleston's leadership — former Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. and the many city councils he worked with — developed a long-term vision for that city and worked at it, piece by piece, until Charleston became what it is today: a city thick with culinary opportunities, offerings, innovations and one known worldwide for top-tier dining. (Don't believe me? *Travel + Leisure* just named Charleston the number one destination in the world for 2016, citing "award-winning hotels . . . and restaurants.")

In Asheville, arguably the number two culinary destination in the Southeast, city leaders made a similar conscious decision to become known for food and drink. It took them more than a decade, but look at that town now: loaded with restaurants, bars and breweries using local products. Visitors and locals wait in line to try a new place or revisit a favorite, to welcome a new brewery into town or frequent their favorite food truck. For both cities, the palate pride is palpable when locals say, "I'm from Charleston" or "I'm from Asheville." And visitors? Same thing. No one comes into work on Monday

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morning and shame-facedly whispers, "I was in Asheville this weekend . . ." They say it proudly, boastfully, as if they're showing off a stamp in their Southern culinary passport.

Without someone charting a course for Wilmington, the city will never be talked about in the same paragraph, much less the same breath, as Charleston or Asheville or Durham, or even Savannah or Greenville. That'd be a shame because — and I'm speaking as a professional food and travel writer who has kept a keen eye on these sister cities — Wilmington should be one of the first cities mentioned when it comes to dining in the South. Here's hoping our local leaders read this, take it to heart and get serious when it comes to marketing Wilmington as the food destination we know it to be.

"We're tired of being the stepchildren," says Mellon with a laugh. "Wilmington's being passed up, but we've got a damn good food scene here."

"Here" being the key word. I spoke about 40 Eats with Mellon, Rhodes, Neff and the *StarNews*' Paul Stephen in Neff's PinPoint Restaurant one sunny morning this spring. Throughout the morning we talked about food, but the conversation was really about place. Neff is no stranger to big press or cooking in a talked-about scene; he came here from John Fleer's brainchild, Rhubarb, in Asheville and before that, Hugh Acheson's famed 5&10 in Athens, Georgia. After we'd gone round-and-round with the subject, Neff expressed the frustration that each of us was feeling.

"People are always comparing themselves to Charleston. 'Who's the next Charleston?' 'How does our city stack up to Charleston?' Man, it sells us short to do this, to compare ourselves to someone else, to want to be them. No. Be you. Be you. Let Wilmington be Wilmington."

"It's all here, though," says Rhodes after a thoughtful moment. "It's here, that pride we want. It's just waiting to show itself. We're proud of our community, and there are so many of us who want that Azalea Festival-vibe all year long. Why don't we have it then? Why don't we show it?"

Rhodes grows quiet and lets his twin questions ring through the empty restaurant. Only the muffled sound of prep — pans rattling, the rev of a VitaMix, the music of mies en place — coming from PinPoint's kitchen break the silence.

"It's so easy to admire Charleston," Rhodes picks back up, "the food scene, the city, the pride in that place — but it takes work to grow. Chefs, food writers, city leaders, anyone with a voice, we have to wear that Wilmington T-shirt and wave that Wilmington flag."

Forging Foodways

Look at other food towns and you'll see food communities. The chefs and owners, support other chefs and owners recognizing the value of a strong,

competitive dining scene. But competitive is a word often misconstrued. This isn't the Thunderdome or a winner-take-all game. It's not a game of any sort. This is competition in that iron-sharpens-iron sense where one chef challenges another to push and grow and they, in turn, challenge another chef to become better. What you forge from this is strength, it strengthens the whole community, it's not a game of musical chairs — one misstep and you're out.

Mellon speaks to this and points to our breweries. They've been working together and pushing each other since they first started brewing. And our craft beer scene is better for it.

"They're the perfect examples," he says. "The stronger one brewery grows, the stronger they all grow. And the stronger they get, the more visitors talk about them and the more visitors they get. That means more press and more notoriety. And it's good for every brewery in town. Same with restaurants. The stronger we are, the more visitors we draw, the more attention we get, which draws even more visitors. It's good to collaborate, a smart move."

At the moment, Rhodes is our most high-profile chef. He's the one with the James Beard recognition, the one who appeared on *Top Chef* (the cooking competition show that shot their 2017 season in — you guessed it — Charleston), he's the one giving Gwenyth Paltrow cooking lessons (and mugging for the camera on her GOOP blog), he's the one making midnight meals for musicians like KRS-One when they come through town, and he's one of the reasons 40 Eats is going to be a success. Because he's humble about his accomplishments, and because he's a vocal supporter of his fellow chefs, he namedrops them at his cooking classes at The Seasoned Gourmet, he frequents their restaurants and in interviews he almost always mentions our strong dining scene.

"Wilmington has the talent, without a doubt," says Rhodes. "The only thing we need now is the attention."

In the food towns that get the attention Wilmington wants a piece of, you find that friendly competition but you also find collaboration, and that's something 40 Eats is working on as well. In July they hosted their first collaborative dinner, and more are in the works.

"You see chefs in other areas supporting each other, cooking with each other for pop-ups or special dinners or at festivals. They want to have — and work to have — a scene that's thriving and supportive. Wilmington has been slow to pick up on this," says Mellon. This is where 40 Eats steps in.

"Yeah, we'll pick up the phone and call, 'Hey man, you got any grouper?' or 'I need a dishwasher, can you recommend someone?' That's where a lot of us have left it," Rhodes says. "But that's going to change."

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Family Style

Since chefs work at the same time as other chefs, there can be inherent difficulty in working together or even in dining out to support other chefs, but that's one area where the 40 Eats principles shine: You'll see them in other restaurants all around town. You'll run into Rhodes at Bento Box or even Jimbo's. You'll find Shawn Wellersdick and Anne Steketee having lunch at Brasserie du Soleil. And if you're sharp-eyed you'll start seeing chefs in restaurants and at farmers markets on the regular.

As Rhodes says, 40 Eats is changing things, planning dinners and events and ways to bring more attention to our dining scene. Neff is already working on that.

"Look at what Dean's doing. I love it. I'm on board," says Rhodes. "He's holding special dinners and bringing in some enormous talent to come cook with him." At Pinpoint, Neff offers a Sunday Supper series, a prix fixe menu of family-style meals that feature ingredients from a local farmer and highlight a local charity. "Yes, it helps draw attention to him," says Rhodes, "but it puts eyes on me, on Billy and James [Doss] and Tripp [Engel], on all of us."

"With our respective networks, we can reach out and get that friend or mentor from New York or DC or Charleston to come cook here," says Neff.

Those endorsements by other chefs — often critically acclaimed chefs — are crucial in drawing attention to a food scene like ours: thriving but in need of the national limelight.

Takeaway

"We've devoted our lives to food," Neff says. "It's great to be able to turn to each other to taste a dish or share an ingredient and find inspiration. With 40 Eats we're just formalizing that."

How's 40 Eats formalizing things? Think supper club, wine dinners, beer dinners, collaborative events, multi-course feasts, pop-ups, secret dinners, guerrilla cuisine. Think reintroducing Wilmington's restaurants to locals and visitors. Think a community of culinary professionals working together and pushing each other in friendly competition, finding inspiration in dishes and ingredients and driving their own cuisine to new and delicious heights. Rhodes calls it a blueprint for what Wilmington could be.

"How dope would it be to have an event at the beach?" asks Rhodes.

How dope indeed.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina *and* Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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Spinning a Life

At the German Café, DJ Edie Senter on music and motherhood

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

On a typical Friday afternoon, you'll find Edie Senter picking up her kids from school, then taking them home and making dinner.

On a typical Friday night, you'll find DJ Milk behind her turntables at the nightclub Pravda downtown, spinning dance music in a room full of revelers.

Edie Senter is DJ Milk, one of Wilmington's most successful disc jockeys. And working as a DJ, she tells me over lunch at the German Café, is actually "a pretty good job for a mom."

Senter did not grow up dreaming of basslines and beats, but when her first marriage broke up in 2004, she became the mother of invention. For three years, she had been a stay-at-home mother in Wilmington. She had a 4-year-old child, a big house downtown and no income. She thought, "What am I going to do?"

Senter considered the things she loved. Having studied drama in college, she had acted professionally in Washington and New York before moving to Los Angeles, where she discovered performance art and yoga. She found her great passion, however, by chance. Her housemate was a disc jockey who went by the name of Gunslinger and when she met him, she says, "My life became full of DJing and parties." Together, they brought theatre, dance and performance art into the design of music parties. Sometimes, Senter wove ribbons of silk through dancing crowds. On full moon nights, she and Gunslinger held events in the desert. "You'd just dance all night and watch the sun come up. One of the interesting things about those parties is you don't get tired. The music inspires you."

Much as she loved that world, Senter never thought of becoming a DJ herself. "There were no girl DJs," she says. "I didn't think that would be a career choice for me."

Years later, though, struggling to find a new life in Wilmington, Senter remembered those parties. "I thought, 'Gosh, I should just DJ here.'"

Her friends tried to dissuade her. They said, "You're crazy. You have to find a good-looking guy and marry him."

Senter ignored them. "I'm going to DJ," she told them.

She took her daughter, Ella, to New York and enrolled at Dubspot, a DJ school in Manhattan where, she says, "I was the only girl in the class." She was also the only one who brought a kid. She may have been the most determined student, too. Though they were all beginners, when Senter introduced herself on the first day, she put her mission bluntly: "I'm going to make a living as a DJ." For the next three months, she and Ella became fixtures at the school. "I took her to class with me, to the labs. She would sit in the office and draw or play a video game."

By the time they returned to Wilmington, Senter was ready, and she found that Wilmington was ready, too. "I did not have a hard time working," she tells me. She played at private parties, at nightclubs and at events for the film industry. If her gender made her a novelty, it was her skill that kept her busy. "Maybe people thought it was interesting that I was a woman," she says, "but if you're not making the bar owners money, they won't keep you on."

To make things work at home, Senter hired a nanny, who moved in and took over the early morning routines so that Senter could sleep in after late nights. At all other times, she found she could be a regular mom to her daughter. "I was there with her except from seven to eight a.m. I would

make dinner, put her to bed, be there all day."

While in New York, Senter had also met Dustin Cook, who ran Dubspot. The two started a life together in 2007. With both of them working as DJs in Wilmington, they asked themselves, "How do we do this for a family life?" Around that time, the nightclub Pravda came up for sale, and they decided to buy it. Now they run both Pravda and KGB, a craft cocktail lounge in the same building. These days, both establishments attract crowds every weekend.

The German Café, tucked away at the back of the Cotton Exchange, feels miles from rollicking Pravda, even though they're only blocks apart. The restaurant offers an eclectic menu, but the German dishes stand out. The cheese platter, for example, includes French brie, herb-speckled mozzarella, chipotle Gouda and a bellissimo serving of prosciutto and melon, but it's the spicy rounds of Landjäger sausage, a chewy German favorite, that feel like the host of the party. Similarly, while the restaurant's wurst sampler includes a smokey Polish kielbasa, the German sausages — a mild knockwurst, and two bratwursts, the gamey Oktoberfest and the tender Bavarian — offer the most interesting, intense flavors.

Senter, the daughter of an Air Force pilot, traveled extensively as a child, attending twelve schools in twelve years, and her family spent enough time in Germany and Austria to give her a nostalgic fondness for the foods of that region. When a plate of potato pancakes arrives at our table — delicate as crépes, but with hearty flavor — she's almost professional in the way she carefully spreads layers of apple sauce and sour cream on one. And the pork schnitzel, served with red kraut and German potato salad, seems to awaken something elemental from her childhood. "It's been a while," she says dreamily. "I love it and I didn't even know I was craving it."

There's another reason Senter harbors a special fondness for the German Café. In 2009, she and Cook were eating dinner there when she went into labor with their son, Oliver. She points across the room. "We were sitting at that table."

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These days, Senter and Cook balance running two businesses, working as DJs and raising their kids. Senter finds that her career works out surprisingly well for family life. "You want to do anything at five o'clock on a Tuesday? We're there."

Even after a decade in this business, Senter still calls it "the most fun job." Music, she says, becomes a collaboration between the DJ and the dancers. "You feed them and they feed you," she says. "If you get a mix and it's perfect for the moment and the whole house comes down, that's a celebration."

It took Senter a while to realize that she could be a DJ, but her own career has helped to expand the possibilities younger women see for their futures. "It's completely normal for my daughter that her mother is a DJ," she says. Now, instead of just dancing in a nightclub, girls like Ella know that they can run the show.

The German Café, which serves lunch and dinner, is located at 316 Nutt Street on the lower level of the Cotton Exchange downtown. For more information about the menu or hours, call (910) 763-5523 or visit thegermancafe.com. The nightclub Pravda is located at 23 North Front Street and KGB at 16 Princess Street; they are in the same building but they have different entrances. For details on Pravda, check out wilmingtonnightclubs.com, and you can find KGB as 'KGB ILM' on Facebook.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

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Arneis the Alternative

The "Little Rascal" of summer wines

By Robyn James

Whenever we enter the dog days of summer, the search is on for refreshing whites to quench your thirst and complement your summer menus of salads, cold plates and seafood. New Zealand sauvignon blanc, Oregon pinot gris and Portugal's vinho verde are always favored go-to summer whites. But what's the new secret for a sommelier's alternate summer white? Try the Italian grape arneis. You can't really call arneis a "new" grape, since there are references hinting back to the 1400s and definite vineyard references to the grape in the 1800s.

If there were ever a wine region known solely for its red wines, the Piedmont region of Italy would be it. This is nebbiolo land, home to the majestic red wines of Barolo and Barbaresco, some of the hardest, most tannic wines on earth. Decades ago, wine geeks joked that these winemakers made wines for their grandchildren to enjoy. Fans of these reds have usually assumed they were produced from 100 percent nebbiolo grapes and in most cases they were right. However, Italian law does allow winemakers to blend arneis into their Barolos and Barbarescos to soften the rock-hard tannins. Just as France permitted the Northern Rhone region to blend the white viognier grape into their tannic syrah as a miniscule softener, so goes Piedmont, Italy. Because of this potential blend, many locals refer to arneis as Barolo bianco or nebbiolo bianco even though there is no genetic thread to connect the grapes as relatives. Centuries ago, arneis was planted among the more valuable nebbiolo grapes in a field blend with the hope that the birds would swoop in to eat the cheaper, fruitier arneis and spare the pricey nebbiolo.

Roughly translated, arneis means "little rascal" or "difficult person." It can be tricky to cultivate, prone to mildew if picked too late, and before the twentieth century winemakers had all but given up on it and extinction threatened.

Modern winemakers plant it in chalky, sandy soil to develop a light-medium body dry wine with more crisp acidity and structure. Common flavors are almonds, apricots, peaches, pears and hops. Winemakers in the United States, always up for a challenge, are planting arneis in Sonoma, Mendocino, Russian River and Oregon with great success. Even Australia and New Zealand are experimenting with plantings.

Two of my favorites come from the Damilano Winery of Barolo and the Cantine Tintero winery from the commune of Mango in Piedmont.

Damilano is one of the oldest wineries in Barolo, passed down to family members for many generations. They pride themselves on their arneis which is dry, delicate, with impressive acidity and full fruit flavors. It has pear flavors, citrus zest and finishes long. It sells for about $18.

Another family operated winery, Cantine Tintero produces Barbaresco, moscato, a rosato (rosé), a blended red, blended white and an arneis.

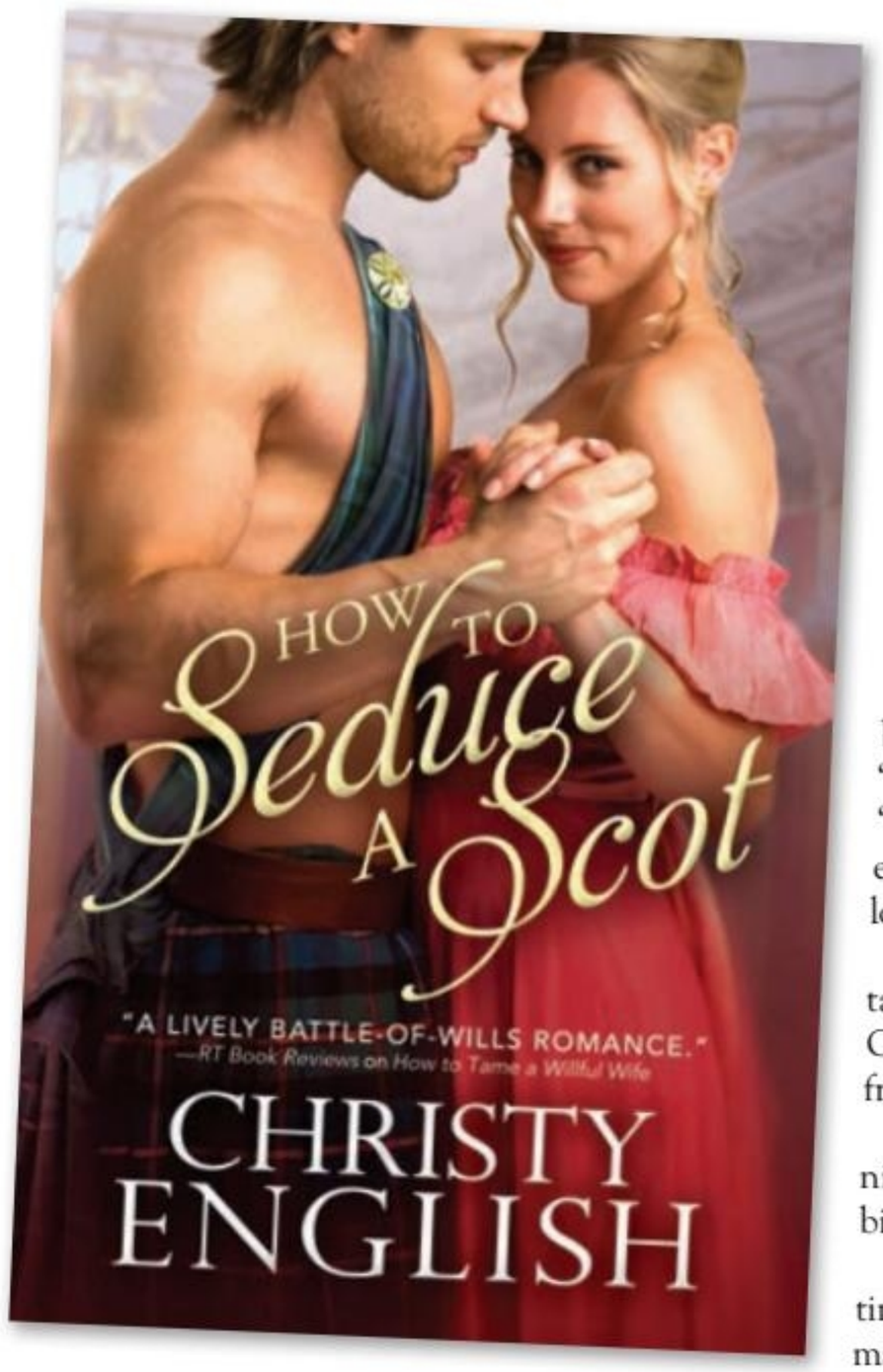
Possibly the best value I have ever discovered, this delicious white, under $12, has alluring floral aromas and flavors with great acidity and a pleasant spiciness. Branch out, try an arneis and cool off with something different for the summer.

Robyn James is a certified sommelier and proprietor of The Wine Cellar and Tasting Room in Southern Pines. Contact her at robynajames@gmail.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GESSNER

How to Seduce a Scot

(Instructions not included)



By Gwenyfar Rohler

Maybe it was the shiny cover. I had been looking for something in my life, some excitement to boost a few flagging days (months). A friend (therapist) suggested I learn a new hobby or skill to pass the time. I guess that's why, when I came across Christy English's *How to Seduce a Scot* (2015, Sourcebooks Casablanca) at the bookstore, I was curious. New hobby? Check.

Now that I had the instruction manual, I just needed some Scots. I wasn't quite sure where to find them, but I assumed the book would tell me where to look. I flipped it open expecting to find the table of contents with headings like "Scots: Locating" or "Mating Rituals."

No table of contents.

OK. Just flip to the index. No problem.

But there was no index.

What the hell kind of instruction manual is this? I mean, the Chilton's manual for my car is more organized. With this manual, I couldn't even figure out how to locate a Scot, let alone feed and care for one — seduction was clearly an advanced level skill I wasn't ready for. Is it too late to join Zumba?

I contemplated returning the book.

After further discussion with my friend (therapist), I decided to try reading it — even without the table of contents to guide me. I flipped through it and there weren't even any illustrations as to the identification of a Scot! Again, how was I supposed to find one to seduce if I couldn't even figure out what they look like or where they live?

My friend (therapist) counseled giving the book a try and not judging it by its shiny cover. "It's not the cover I'm judging it by!" I responded. "It's the lack of identifying illustrations and non-existent chapter headings! Do you think I should look for a different book about Scot seduction?"

She pressed her lips together for a second and tapped the cover. "Isn't that a picture of a Scot? Couldn't you figure out what they looked like from that picture?"

I studied it carefully for a few minutes, running my fingertips up and down the rippling biceps flexing under the tartan plaid.

"Maybe," I conceded. "But when was the last time you saw a man walking around in a toga made of upholstery fabric with a six o'clock shadow? Where do you even look for a man like that?"

My friend (therapist) pressed her lips together again and nodded, appearing to take in the full import of my problem. "Perhaps if you read the book there might be some sort of information about where the picture was taken?"

It seemed like a good idea. I pointed to the lady with blonde ringlets on the cover. Her dress was falling off, but she had that Scot by the hand and wasn't letting go. "Do you think I need one of these as bait?" I asked, pointing to the lady in a state of undress. "Does it have to be chiffon? She wouldn't have such a hard time staying dressed if she wore something a little more substantial than chiffon."

I began a mental tally for the cost of a pretty pink dress and a lady with blonde ringlets. I knew from experience that pretty blondes were expensive to house and feed. Though they might not eat much, they are incredibly finicky eaters and only seem to like very expensive non-food items. They leave a trail of destruction behind them. The costs of keeping them happy and repairing the damage in their wake is astronomical. I had one once in the early '90s, but my mother made me give her away because we just couldn't afford her. I wasn't sure I could take the heartbreak of another blonde.

Do you think I could seduce a Scot without a blonde? I wondered. I felt

sick to my stomach with worry.

Finally, in an act of frustration, I sat down with a pad of paper and a pen, ready to read the book and make notes for a plan to seduce my first Scot.

According to the book, I needed to go to a ball in Regency England. There, I should meet a feisty brunette who liked to throw knives. After wounding me, the Scot would appear to bandage my wounds, and once I had him by the hand I shouldn't let him go, but argue with him constantly. I wasn't sure if I personally should do this, or use my blonde to do it — the book wasn't fully clear on that. Part of why blondes are expensive is that they are so difficult to please — so if you want someone to argue with, that's probably a good place to start. I sighed and said a silent prayer that the blonde we had re-homed in the '90s was happy and that the people we gave her

. . . I sat down with a pad of paper and a pen, ready to read the book and make notes for a plan to seduce my first Scot.

to could afford to feed her.

"I spent all afternoon trying to find Regency England in the atlas," I reported to my friend (therapist). "It doesn't exist."

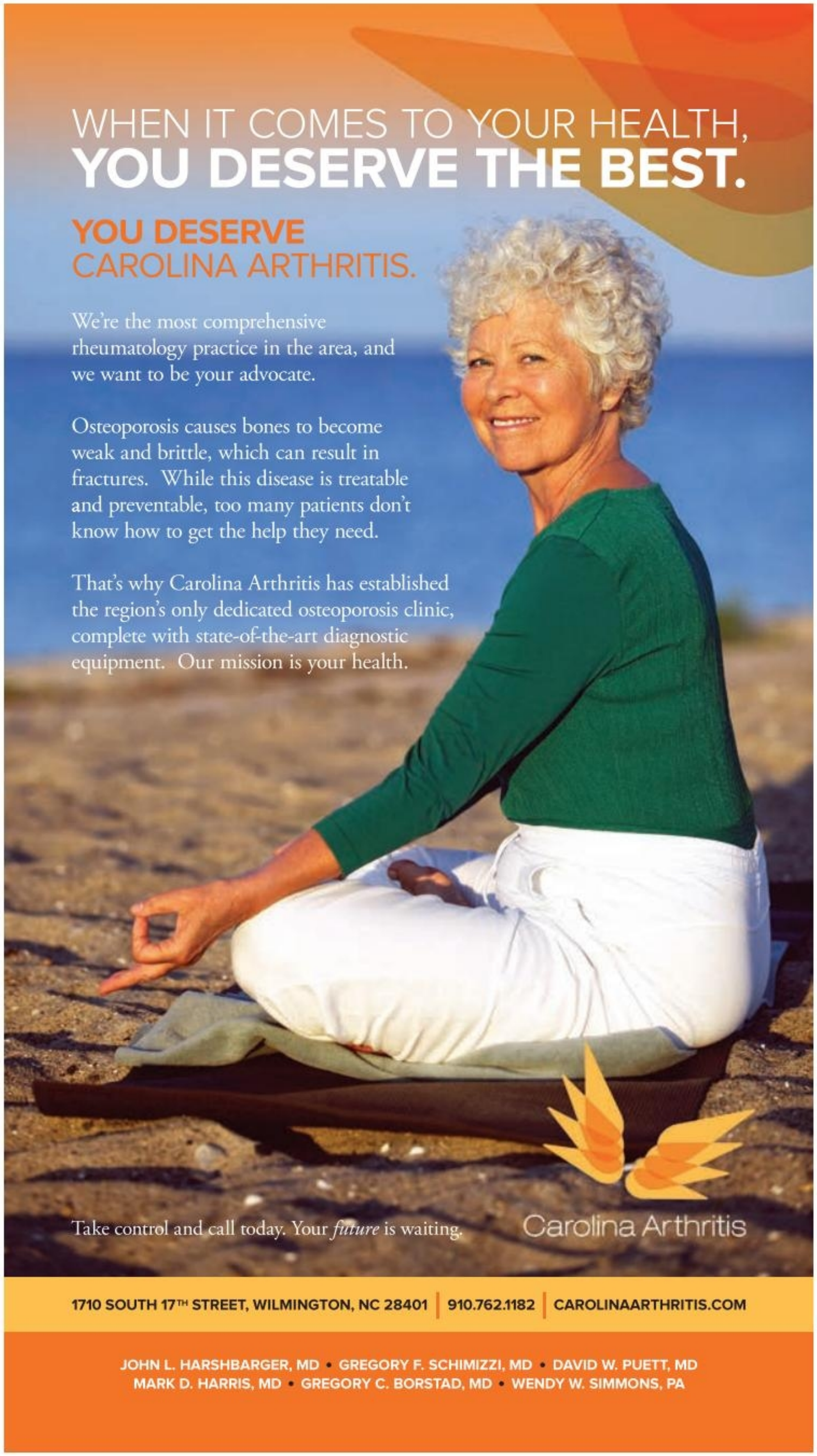
She gave me a surprised look. "But the book says it does?"

I nodded. "I've been trying to put together a budget for this hobby — but since I can't figure out the travel cost or estimate the care and maintenance of my Scot once I seduce him . . . all I know is that I need a blonde first and I can't afford one." I threw up my hands. "I think I need a different hobby!"

My friend (therapist) nodded again, and after a pause commented that the excitement I found was not what I expected, the hoped-for Scot, but it occupied me nonetheless, so perhaps we should declare this experiment a success. What did I think?

I remarked that instruction manuals just weren't written the way they used to be.

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her summer days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street and reading silly fantasy novels.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Beached

It was the summer before the war, and they were boys in search of a little adventure

By Anne Barnhill

In the summer of 1941, my father, Jack Clinard, and two of his best buddies, Jay Helms and Boomer Hancock, drove his father's brand-new Plymouth to Wrightsville Beach for a few days of fun in the sun. Why would a thrifty man — a man who scraped for every penny — loan his car to a boy who hadn't had his driver's license for six months? I suspect my grandfather, a school principal, could see that in a few short years his son would be drafted into the war — a danger that loomed in the not-too-distant future. In a short span of time, life would come at these boys hard and heavy, but for this one sweet moment, they were footloose and fancy-free. That must be why he allowed a bunch of teenagers to drive his brand-spanking-new car to the coast.

These three Winston-Salem boys were children of the Great Depression and, as such, worked hard. A beach respite was most welcome. At 12 years old, my father worked a paper route for three or four years, walking at least a mile each morning before the school day started to pick up and deliver his papers. In the afternoons he walked from school back downtown to get the evening paper for delivery. His pal Jay worked in a local grocery store. Boomer also had some sort of job, but Dad can't remember what. After all, that was over seventy years ago.

Growing up the youngest of three, Dad was only 5 years old when the stock market crashed. He can remember receiving secondhand toys for Christmas and longing for some of the things his wealthier neighbors had. But given the nature of the times, living economically was as natural to his family as breathing. Being able to purchase a new car was a treat most rare — it was the first new car my father had ever seen his father buy.

By the time Dad got his driver's license he had quit the paper route and worked as a runner for Wachovia Bank, taking messages back and forth between the main bank on Third Street and its only branch several blocks over. That summer Dad and his pals proposed taking off for the beach and — to their utter surprise — my grandfather trusted them with his shiny, dent-free Plymouth.

Of course, the boys had very little money among them. But they had big plans.

All of the boys were 16. In two short years, my father would find himself in the Navy, shipping out to North Africa, where he would spend his time in the service as a medic. Jay was 4-F due to being flat-footed and would stay put in Winston-Salem. Boomer? Boomer followed my father's lead and joined the Navy, but they were stationed a world apart.

At that time, it was easy to park on the beach and camp at Wrightsville, and that's exactly what they intended to do. One fellow would sleep in the front seat, another in the back, and the third would sleep in the trunk — leaving it open, of course. Each night they would trade places; all's fair in friendship and adventure.

They figured they would pool what money they had, buy some peanut butter, bread and jelly, and live mostly on those rations. They'd be sure to save enough bucks for gas to return home. They thought they would be able to stay a week, maybe more if they were frugal and didn't give in to the urge to splurge.

There wasn't any air-conditioning in homes or cars in those days, so when the boys arrived at the beach they drove right up to the ocean's edge, hopped out of the sweltering car and ran toward the water. There was no one around, but Dad very conscientiously locked the new car, wanting to impress his father with his responsible care-taking of the precious vehicle. He stuck the keys in his pocket.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out what happened next. A big wave tumbled Dad and his pals head over heels. When Dad got to his feet, he checked his pockets and — you guessed it — no keys.

So, there they were. Two hundred miles from home. No telephones around, certainly no cell phones — with a car they couldn't get into, much less start. And a furious father to be faced if they did manage to hitchhike home to explain how they'd had to abandon the brand-new vehicle at the edge of the ocean.

Facing his own father was a fate my dad refused to allow. So, he came up with a plan. He would hitchhike to the nearest store and get help.

While Dad was on his way to find assistance, Boomer and Jay decided to find some shade and escape the heat of the desolate beach. In those days the trunk of a car had no lock, only a lever. They opened the trunk, pushed the backseat out of the way and crawled to the front, where they opened the windows and unlocked the doors. Every now and then, they took a dive into the salty water, body-surfed and played. There was no one else around, only a couple of fishing boats on the blue horizon.

Meanwhile, off went my dad, holding his thumb out and walking toward Wilmington, his pockets filled with all the money they'd pitched in. After all, they had no idea how much their solution was going to cost. He hoped what they had would be enough.

After what seemed like a long time, an old man in a rattletrap truck stopped, picked Dad up and took him to the first store in sight. What happened next has become the stuff of family legend, the story told and retold whenever Dad, Jay

and Boomer got together. After certain beverages had been consumed in just the right quantity, Jay would begin the tale. I've heard it so often, I can still feel the delight in Jay's voice as he started:

"So Boomer and I'd been waiting on ole Jack for the whole afternoon. We stayed in the water for the most part — when we needed a break from the water, we sat in the front seat of the car, dripping wet. It was almost dusk. Hadn't been a car in sight all day. Then, doing a slow crawl, I saw what I thought to be a taxi! Who the hell would be coming to the beach in a taxi? We watched as the cab pulled up to where the Plymouth sat in the sand. Then Jack hopped out of the backseat. He reached into his pocket, pulled out nearly all the cash we'd given him and paid the cab driver.

"I couldn't believe it. At that point, I figured he was suffering from sunstroke. I mean, he took a taxi? So, Boomer and I walked over to him and I said, 'Fancy ride. How we gonna start your daddy's car?'

"Jack looked me straight in the eye, stuck his hand in the brown paper bag he was holding, pulled out something so small I couldn't make it out at first.

"'With this,' he said.

"'A mousetrap? You spent our money for a cab and all you brought back was a mousetrap?' At this point, I knew he'd lost his mind.

"Boomer and I were skeptical at best, but soon Jack had both of us leaning over the engine, figuring out how to use the mousetrap to start her up. And by Jove, it worked!"

Once they were able to start the car at will, the boys decided to stay at the beach as long as what little money they had left would last.

That night, they parked the car in what looked like an empty gas station lot. The heat was still scorching and since no one was around, they stripped down to their skivvies. After some libations, they crawled into their appointed slots and slept like kings until about six in the morning, when a bus full of tourists pulled into the lot, shining its headlights on their scantily clad bodies. Of course, the more often Jay told the story, the funnier it grew. I still remember belly laughs and tear-stained faces when the three pals regaled us with this and other tales.

Jay took his gift of gab into his life as a salesman. He passed away several years ago. Boomer? Boomer lives with his wife in the Chicago area after a career as an electrical engineer — not surprising, given his mousetrap experience. And after a distinguished career as a music professor, Dad relocated to the beach permanently. At 91 years old, he is still doing what he loves best — making music at Holden Beach Chapel.

Anne Barnhill is the author of four books, most recently the historical novel Queen Elizabeth's Daughter, *from St. Martin's Press.*

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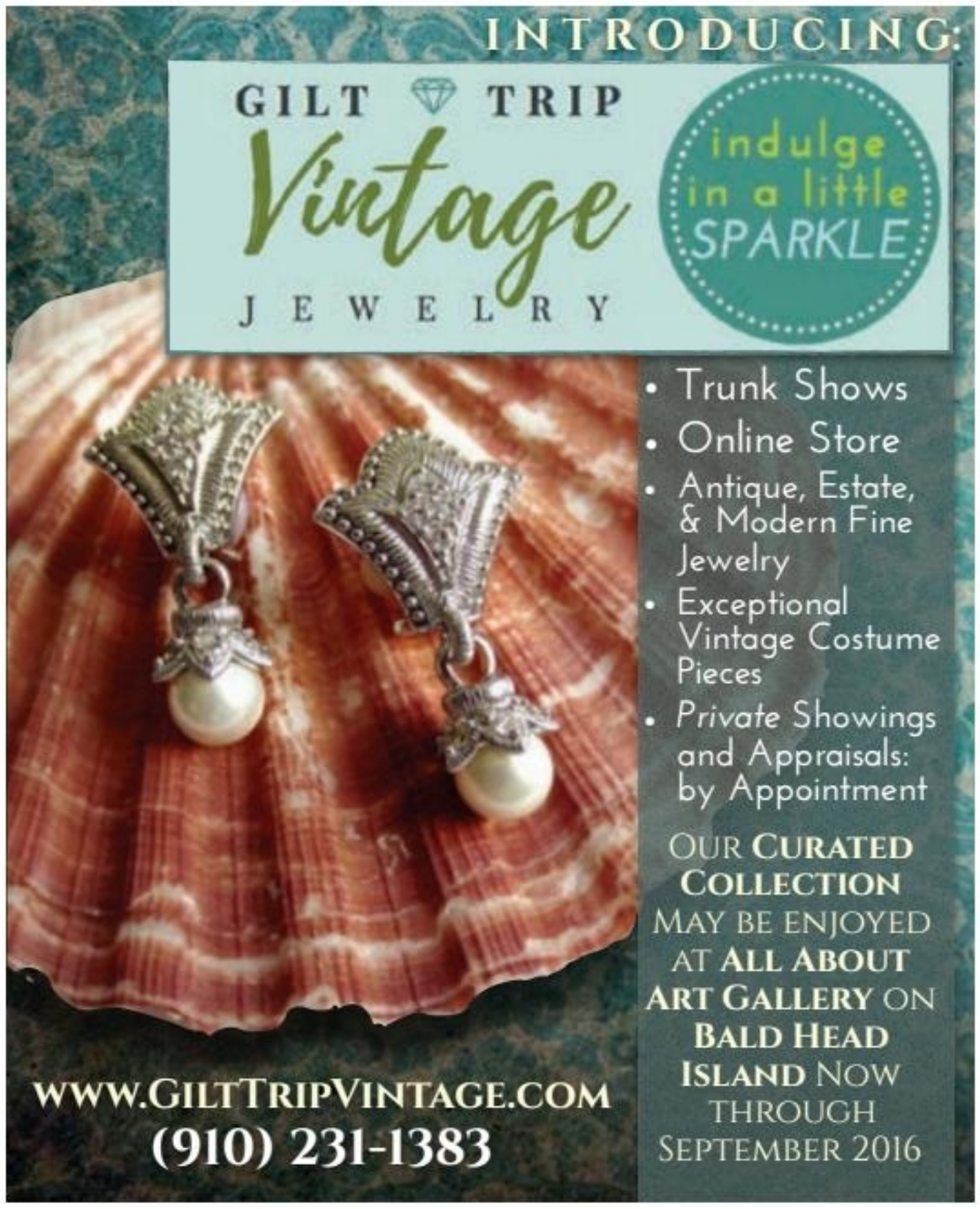
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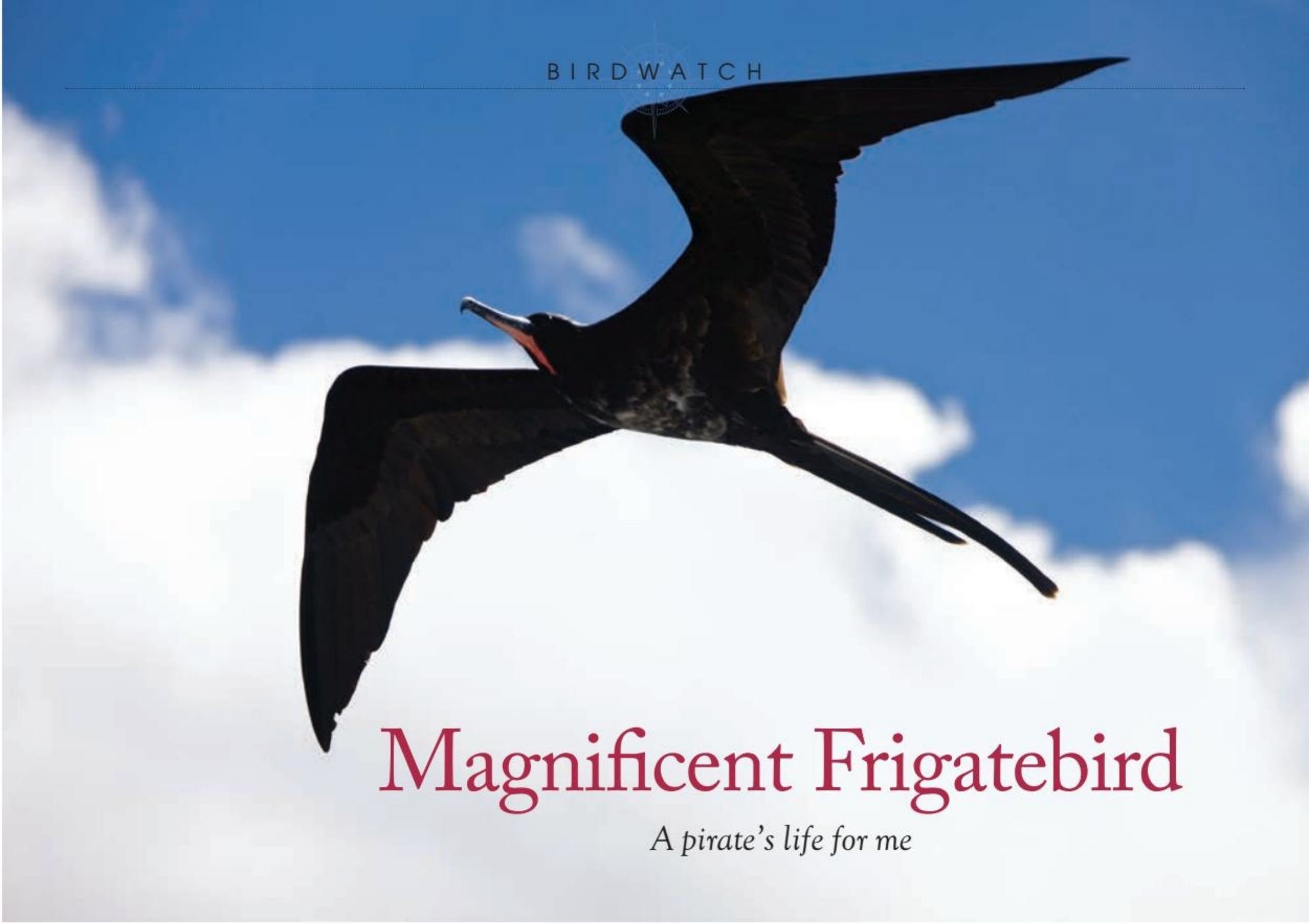

Magnificent Frigatebird

A pirate's life for me

By Susan Campbell

Without a doubt, the magnificent frigatebird is the seabird worth seeing along the coast this summer – that is, if you can spot one! A bird of tropical oceans, it is rare to see a magnificent frigatebird, given that breeding takes place far south of the United States, but it is certainly possible. This species regularly flies long distances in search of prey, often making its way northward over the Atlantic Ocean. With a good bit of luck, you might see one of these "Man-o'-war-birds" above North Carolina's coastal waters.

Look out for large, black M-shaped silhouettes, forked tails and long, hooked bills. This species is unmistakable. This bird's size and shape are very imposing and as a result, this bird has no need for vocalizations.

Because they spend most of their time soaring, frigatebirds are most likely to turn up locally following tropical weather. Hurricanes may sweep one or several northward, and they may linger awhile.

As much as frigatebirds are birds of the open ocean, they rarely land on the water. Due to their long, thin wings, they have optimal gliding and maneuvering capability. Their ability to ride winds and rising warm air is so good that they can remain airborne for days or even weeks at a time. I was never more amazed than when I witnessed these incredibly adapted birds seeming to hang in the air twenty-four hours a day during a vacation on the island of Tobago.

Skilled predators, they can often be seen swooping to snatch fish or other saltwater prey from the ocean's surface, but it's their pirate antics that are legendary. Frigatebirds will harass gulls, terns and other seabirds until they release or even regurgitate prey, claiming the spoils for their own consumption.

Just as intimidating is the blazing red throat sack of the male magnificent frigatebird. The mating ritual involves the males displaying their inflated red throat sack and rapidly clacking their bills to entice females high overhead. It's quite a sight. Breeding occurs in stunted trees on small islands where young are safe from predators. Young birds are fed by their parents and develop slowly, remaining together as a family unit for many months until they take to the skies again.

Even though magnificent frigatebirds are an annual occurrence in southeastern North Carolina, sightings are rare and noteworthy. Should you see one of these magnificent birds soaring anywhere in the area, please let me know!

Susan would love to hear from you. Feel free to send questions or wildlife observations to susan@ncaves.com.

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Northbound Wonders

Like chips of sunlight, a breakaway group of summer butterflies begins their long journey over the dunes

By Virginia Holman

It's August, and the cloudless sulphur butterflies are beginning to arrive. I always smile to see these chips of sunshine zinging along the dunes. I love their quick wing beats and funny bobbing flight pattern, the same sort of rise and fall of a lady on a cantering horse.

I started paying attention, truly observing the cloudless sulphurs, one August four years ago, at the start of my son's senior year in high school. We'd quarreled about something silly; I can't recall what, but we both felt stung and confused. His time to fledge was approaching.

That August, his looming departure was no longer an abstraction — he had one final year at home, which felt both too long and too short. We each held knots of fear and frustration that defied articulation. I felt helpless at that moment because I didn't know how to soften the pain for either of us, and it felt like some failure of parenting — as if the experience of complicated emotions was somehow a problem to solve. So we gave up our spat and walked to the beach that day as a sort of truce, a way to move forward. I was grateful we were together in our bewilderment, and I was grateful for the silence between us, because what could be said?

Though it was evening, the sun still blazed on our backs as we sat at the edge of the water. The wind was up and a fine spray of sand stung our skin. Well, that was a bust, I thought, and we got up to head home. At the dune line, we stopped and watched as hundreds of cloudless sulphurs moved past. First a few, then a few more, staggered like heats in a race. There seemed to be a miles-long tattered banner of butterflies flitting by us on some invisible current.

Where are they going? we wondered. Then, *what migrates north in the fall? Why?*

These butterflies, unlike monarchs, weren't heading south to Mexico to winter over. They were going north, completely against what I thought of as migratory common sense. I was told later by a lepidopterist that cloudless sulphurs have occasional "breakaway" groups that migrate north. Few will survive to reproduce, but the few that do are said to expand territory. At least that's the theory.

I thought that was interesting, but what I found most interesting of all, or most intriguing to me, was that the instinct of the butterfly held an intelligence I couldn't fully comprehend. I could study it for the rest of my life, but I'd never be able to experience what it experienced; the exquisite impulse that drove it north was its own. I could only watch and wonder and marvel.

Author Virginia Holman, a regular Salt *columnist, teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington and occasionally guides with Kayak Carolina.*

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When Honeybees Were Everywhere

Once, honeybees covered the clover-carpeted ground, their steady hum linked so closely

with the clovers' heavy heads and thread-like stems it could have been, instead, the language

of these fragrant flowers — perhaps what they whispered to one another in the early morning

light on a summer day as the barefoot children burst from their houses and the dogs began

to bark and the milkman with his thick-soled boots tromped through the yards, and mothers

dragged their laundry baskets across the grass while bees scattered and the clover, briefly

trampled, rose again — their pale, dew-damp faces poised to receive the bees' next kiss.

– Terri Kirby Erickson

Summer Postcards from The Edge

Our Photographers

When **Tim Sayer** graduated from the College of Charleston with a theater degree, he did what all promising theater majors do — he waited tables. That was until he took a surfing trip to Costa Rica with some buddies and fell in love with photography. Self-taught, Sayer has had a studio in Southern Pines for twelve years. He captured performer Raquel Reed, kind of a Lady Gaga before Lady Gaga came along, in a New York City apartment.

You might as well say **John Gessner** got his start in photography on his paper route. Growing up in the Lake Region of upstate New York, one of his customers had been a still photographer during the silent movie era. Helen Hayes had a house down the street. As a boy Gessner met the famed portrait photographer Yousuf Karsh. He was hooked. He discovered a fortune-telling machine in one of the ancient arcades in Mrytle Beach.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HASHI

Andrew Sherman is a freelance photographer specializing in architecture, food and lifestyle. A Maryland native and Wilmingtonian at heart, he moved away to get his MFA in photography at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) but returned after finishing because there's no place like Wilmington. He believes in the power of collaboration and works closely with his clients to produce clean, graphic, upbeat imagery. Find him roaming the city he loves with camera or cocktail in hand.

The Tufts Archives in the Given Memorial Library is the custodian of the rich history of Pinehurst. In addition to original Donald Ross golf course plans and numerous Tufts family artifacts, the archives' collection includes 80,000 photographic negatives by John G. Hemmer spanning over 40 years of Pinehurst history. Hemmer photographed celebrities, golfers and the unique — and sometimes fanciful — life of a thriving resort, including the occasional aquatic balancing act.

A Greensboro native, **Lynn Donovan** has been a swimmer, coach, actor, singer, dancer, pianist, accordion player, scuba diver and community volunteer. Starting out with a Brownie camera in the 1960s, she graduated to an SLR in the 1970s and continued shooting throughout her 30-year career with Greensboro Parks & Recreation's City Arts/Community Services, as well as for pleasure. After retiring Donovan opened her own photography business.

Ned Leary retired from the corporate world in 2003, bought a camera at the local Best Buy and hasn't looked back. Self-taught, he learned the basics via endless hours of internet tutorials and numerous landscape photography workshops in America's national parks. His portfolio has evolved from fine art landscapes to include family portraits and most recently videography, where the balance of his time and pension are currently devoted.

Ginny Johnson has been photographing since college and remembers the good old days of developing her own film and printing images in a darkroom. She loves to shoot just about anything but has recently turned her camera lens to storm-chasing. The image used in this feature is from a tour in 2015. A Colorado native, Johnson has lived in North Carolina since 1982 and currently resides in Greensboro with her dog, Blackie, and cat, Rascal, and two horses.

Mark Steelman is a full-time professional photographer and works hard to ensure anyone or anything looks its absolute best. Recalling a recent stop at the convention center, he says he took a photo of a group of women. One was particularly stressed about her photo and pleaded, "You be sure to Photoshop me." He replied, "Ma'am, I don't mess with perfection." Her face beamed and she gave him a kiss right in the middle of the ballroom. What's not to love?

Sam Froelich is a professional photographer and an award-winning independent film producer, whose films, such as *Cabin Fever* and *George Washington*, have been distributed worldwide. His best three productions all came in on time but way over budget — son Jake is currently senior at NC State, son Harrison a freshman at UNCC, and daughter Lucy a sophomore at Page High School. Froelich, born and raised in High Point, married a Greensboro girl, who made him move to the "big" city and for that he is eternally grateful.

Laura L. Gingerich is an award-winning freelance photographer. Her talent and gritty spirit have led her to the far corners of the world documenting relief and disaster assistance, and providing images that tell a story when words simply can't. When she's not on assignment, Gingerich's popular photography workshops inspire beginners to advanced enthusiasts. You can contact her by sending an email to stoptime325@gmail.com.

It's been such a long, hot summer, we couldn't resist the temptation to invite ten of our favorite contributing writers to uncage their overheated imaginations and tell us what's *really* going on in the original photographs submitted by ten of our favorite photographers. The results, we think, are like fictional summer postcards from the edge . . .

Our Writers

Virginia Holman writes both feature stories and her column "Excursions" for *Salt*. Her passions include kayaking, birding, teaching creative writing at UNCW and conjuring the siren songs from our salty marshlands. Her memoir of her mother's untreated schizophrenia during the 1970s, *Rescuing Patty Hearst*, won a National Alliance on Mental Illness Outstanding Literature Award. She's also been awarded a Pushcart Prize, a North Carolina Arts Council Fellowship, and a Carter Center Mental Health Journalism Fellowship.

Maggie Dodson is the eldest and wisest child of James Dodson. She's a reluctant New Yorker, avid biker, terrible photographer, stinky cheese lover, Stevie Nicks enthusiast, and aspiring film writer. Currently, she is copywriting her heart out for a large Manhattan-based PR firm, making short movies in her spare time, and tending to every need and want of her cinnamon-colored beagle, Billie Holiday.

Billy Ingram is OG, Original Greensboro, but spent one of his lifetimes as a movie poster designer in Beverly Hills, California. A frequent contributor to *O.Henry*, Ingram has written about popular culture, art and Greensboro history. His latest book, *Hamburger(squared)*, is a collection of short essays about the city he grew up in. The volume is available at the Greensboro Historical Museum, Amazon.com and your favorite bookstore.

Ross Howell Jr. published the historical novel *Forsaken* with NewSouth Books of Montgomery, Alabama, in February 2016. The novel was selected as an "Okra Pick" by the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance (SIBA), was called "superior historical fiction detailing a cruel national past," in *Forward*, and noted by *Southern Living* as "a solid entry into the Southern canon." Howell is currently at work on a new novel and writes regularly for *O.Henry*.

Maria Johnson is a contributing editor of *O.Henry*. Since the magazine's founding five years ago, she has written humor columns and feature stories. A native of Kentucky, Johnson moved to North Carolina for a newspaper job in 1983. She has won several state and national awards for her journalism. She and her husband have called Greensboro home for more than 30 years.

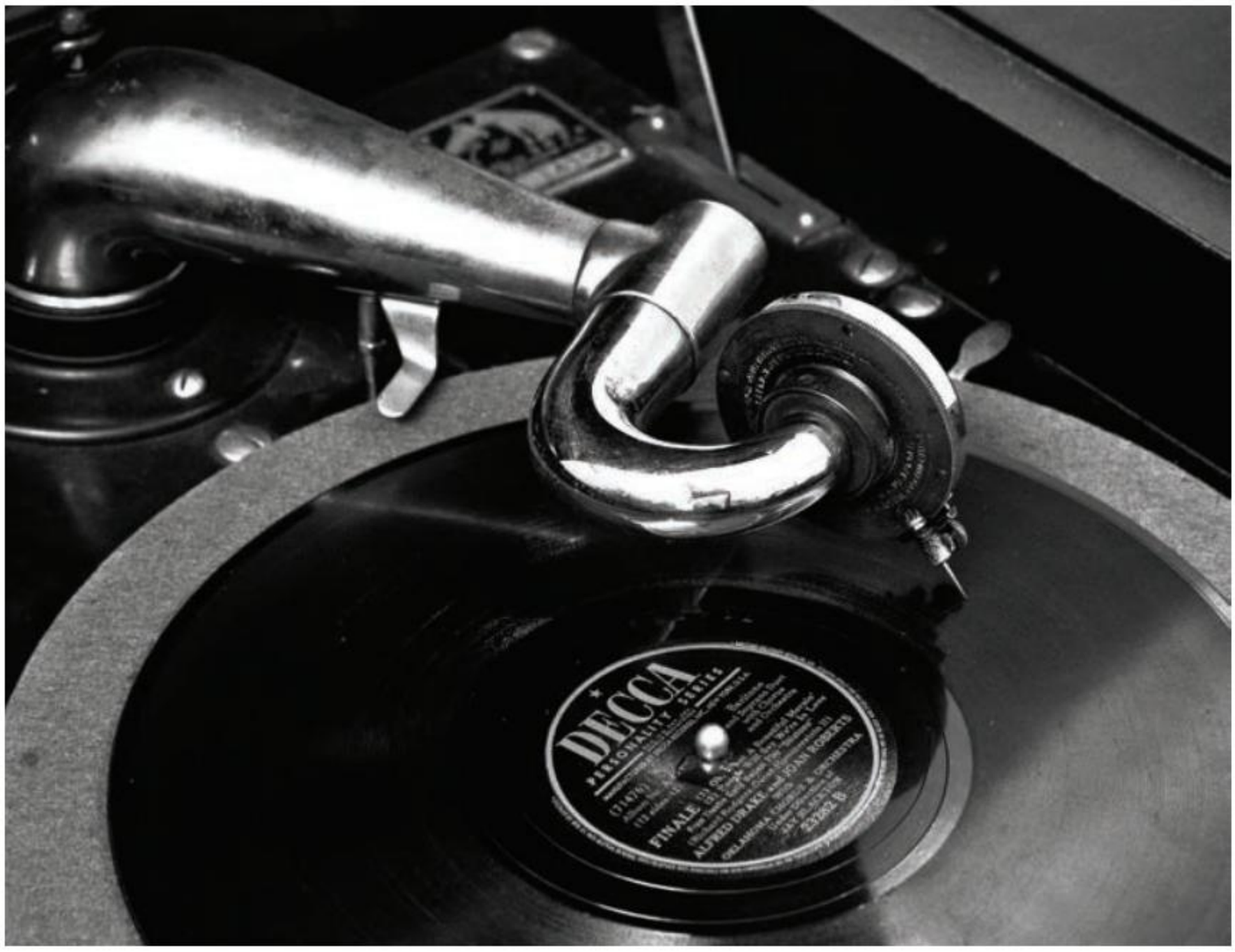
Jim Moriarty is the new senior editor at *PineStraw* and an old golf writer. Author of two golf novels, he traveled the PGA Tour for thirty-five years writing and taking photographs for *Golf World* and *Golf Digest*. His most recent book of essays, *"Playing Through,"* will be released in October. He can be found at his favorite public house, affectionately referred to by at least one patron as the Bitter and Twisted.

Stephen Smith is a retired professor, a current poet and graceful voice from *PineStraw*'s earliest days to now. His poems, stories, columns and reviews have appeared in many periodicals and anthologies. He is the author of seven previous books of poetry and prose and is the recipient the Poetry Northwest Young Poet's Prize, the Zoe Kincaid Brockman Prize for poetry, and four North Carolina Press awards.

Until this summer **Serena Brown** was living in Southern Pines, where she worked as senior editor of *PineStraw* magazine. Prior to that she was part of the award-winning team at the BBC's prestigious arts documentary series *Arena*. A native Briton, Brown returned recently to the misty shores of her home country. She is now unpacking and trying very hard to remember which box contains an umbrella.

Gwenyfar Rohler is a prolific writer, reader and archivist. Her writing can be found on the pages of *Salt* in her column"Stagelife / Screenlife" and "Omnivorous Reader." As a founding member of Luddites United for Preservation, she spends her days managing her family's bookshop on Wilmington's Front Street and in her spare time, restoring two pre-computer-age cars. She wrote this bio by lantern and sent it by pigeon.

Mark Holmberg is a writer who splits his time between Wilmington and Richmond, Virginia, where he writes for *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* and WVTR.com. He enjoys roaming with a camera in hand or surfing and fishing in coastal Carolina. He believes there's some room for good ol' printed words about believers and strays and adventurers who know anger and division make us weaker and easier to control, and that love is stronger than fear.



Spinnin' Platters

STORY BY GWENYFAR ROHLER · PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

"I'm worried about your father." My mother didn't even let me get inside the kitchen door before she rounded on me with a spatula in her hand. The unmistakable rhythm of the opening chords of "Peggy Sue" vibrated through the walls. Mom flipped a pancake in the cast iron skillet. It was breakfast-for-dinner-night — which meant she was really worried about Daddy. "He's been playing those records all day." Buddy Holly's guitar was turned up at top volume, a shock in a house where one could pinpoint each family member by the sound of their footsteps. Her normally domineering voice was almost drowned out, and I wondered if part of her annoyance wasn't just that for the first time in my memory she wasn't the most powerful sound at home. She shook her head again, this time with a jerk of impatience. "This has something to do with his ex-girlfriends." She picked up a paring knife and began slicing peaches to go on top of the pancakes.

"Haven't you guys been married for like forty years?" I asked. "What do his ex-girlfriends have to do with this?" I snagged a piece of bacon from the plate on the center of the stove. "Are they even still alive?"

"Go check on your father." She swatted my hand away from the plate. "Go." She gestured with the knife down the hallway.

One does not argue with a well-armed matriarch.

I went.

In the living room my father was sprawled across his favorite upholstered chair with the carelessness of late adolescence: limbs floppy and akimbo, still-shod feet up on the coffee table. His eyes were closed singing along with the music, periodically directing part of the band with one hand in the air. Two speakers, like obese standard poodles, had been hauled down from the attic. They were still covered in dust — except for his handprints — and connected by huge loops of new speaker cord to the record player and amplifier that had materialized from some place of hiding.

"Hi Daddy . . ." I ventured. Somehow this didn't look like something that I should interrupt.

"Hi Kitty." He hit a few drumbeats in the air. "Have you met Buddy? Buddy, this is my daughter, Kitty." He opened his eyes and looked straight at me. "Do not ever get on a non-commercial flight in an ice storm." He stared at me intensely and with deep meaning. "Do you hear me? Not ever." He underscored this last point with a finger slash through the air.

"OK . . . I promise."

"Good." He closed his eyes again. I backed out of the room feeling that I was somehow intruding on a world that I could never understand.

Back in the kitchen Mom asked me what I had learned. Were the ex-girlfriends, in fact, at the root of this?

"Um, no, apparently this is about non-commercial aviation and ice storms," I reflected. "So I think this is about Howard Hughes."

"Alan Fried, you mean. And no, don't be fooled by that. This is about more than just an isolated incident." She cocked her head to listen to the sudden silence. Daddy's shaking hand scratched the record a bit when he tried to drop the needle on the next disc, then a groovy guitar pierced the air with a slight cymbal and the unmistakable wail of Janis Joplin.

"Oh, no, he didn't!" Mom looked toward the living room. *You know you got it, oooh wooaaoh if it makes you feel* . . . Janis crooned. Mom ran a hand through her hair, then turned back to me. "You should go spend the night at a friend's house tonight."

Connected

Story by Mark Holmberg

Photograph by Laura Gingerich

It was a short, hand-written letter that marched right into Margie's soul with each neatly penned word.

I was on Bus 28, it said. *It was me who was with you that day, who left you the note with the ring at the hospital. I read of your husband's death last year, and I hoped you might meet me so I can share something that has long been on my heart.*

The letter was signed Tony Pyanoe, and listed a date, time and, surprisingly, she and her late husband's favorite Italian restaurant.

Margie knew right where that old mysterious note was. She found her J.T. Hoggard class of '71 yearbook filled with heartfelt and tearful messages written by virtually all of her classmates.The folded note slid easily out from under the cover. It had come to her hospital room forty-five years earlier in an anonymous envelope with a simple, wedding band-like ring.

I have long admired you and am so glad you survived. We had nothing in common at school, but our blood mixed on the bus that day. I wish you a long life and I will always love you.

She put down the strange note and thumbed to the Ps in her yearbook.

Ahh, that Tony, she thought, looking at the stamp-sized photo.

They had shared a few classes. He was a quiet, awkward boy, his hair already thinning. One of the nerds, she recalled. He was the son of Italian immigrants — working class. Far from rich, unlike her family, who owned big chunks of Wilmington real estate. And Margie had been as beautiful and popular as she had been rich. She had been the Homecoming Queen. Her boyfriend was the star of the lacrosse and football teams. Her boyfriend . . .

He had been sitting next to her on Bus 28 during a senior field trip when the bus driver apparently suffered a heart attack and drove through the College Road intersection. They were T-boned by a tractor-trailer.

Her boyfriend was killed instantly, along with three other students. It was the worst school bus crash in North Carolina history.

She woke up in the hospital with no idea what had happened. Along with several broken bones she had suffered a deep laceration to her neck that left a long, high-ridged scar that she looked at every day.

Her doctors had told her one of her fellow students apparently kept her from bleeding to death, but the rescue scene was so chaotic, no one really knew exactly what had happened.

Margie went to her jewelry box and found the ring. She had worn it for years, imagining a hero student and remembering how lucky she was. When she got married, she took the ring off, but noticed it frequently while getting dressed.

She slid it on her right ring finger and decided to go.

Tony had gone to Vietnam a year after the crash and had eventually become an engineer, he told Margie at the restaurant. He had married and raised a family. His wife had died of cancer two years earlier.

He looked like a much-older version of the nondescript boy in the yearbook. But there was kindness and strength in his eyes.

"I never forgot you," he told her as they ate their entrees.

Like many boys at Hoggard, he had idolized her, he said, not because she was beautiful, but because she was kind.

"When the bus crashed, my first thought was of you," he told her, his brown eyes gazing into hers.

"Both my arms were broken," he said. "I couldn't feel my hands. But I crawled over to you and blood was pumping out of your beautiful neck."

Subconsciously, she lifted her hand and felt her scar — something she did a dozen times a day.

"So I lay down beside you and kissed your neck. I used my lips to draw the wound together and put enough pressure to keep the blood from spurting until the medics came."

He reached out his hand and Margie took her hand from her neck and put it in his.

"I know how crazy this sounds," he continued, "but in the midst of that crazy disaster, all I could think about was how beautiful you smelled, how wonderful it was to be that close."

Margie could hardly believe what she was hearing.

"Why didn't you tell me this back then?" Margie asked. "Why the anonymous note?"

"I knew you were destined for better things," Tony said. "By the time I got my engineering degree and a decent job, you were already married."

She looked at the simple ring — it still fit nicely — as the waitress brought their dessert. Such an odd thing, the way this virtual stranger was making her feel. So comfortable, so protected, so cherished. And so not alone. And there was this powerful feeling of an old, nagging mystery being solved at last.

"All these years I've dreamed of being this close to you again," he said, leaning across the table.

"I've seen your face, smelled your hair in a thousand dreams. For so long I desperately wanted to kiss you again, even if for just one moment."

Margie found herself leaning across her coffee. His fingers gently touched that scar on her neck, and then they were in her hair as he pulled her close for the kiss that would change the rest of their lives — forever.

Black Limbertwig

Story by Virginia Holman

Photograph by Andrew Sherman

Each Sunday, Great Grandmother Zelia, propped in her wingback chair, declared she wished to see one place before she died, her old farm. No one could bear to tell her it was gone, sold by her great nephew soon after she'd moved to assisted living. Her facility was good and the staff generous, but it took a lifetime's assets and her monthly Social Security check to secure good care. Mother politely entertained the notion of a trip to the farm, so as not to crush Zelia's spirit, but not for too long, because that would raise her hopes. Zelia was easily distracted, so in that way, the conversation was deferred.

Two years before Zelia died, she offered me her sturdy 1971 Buick Estate station wagon as a sixteenth birthday present. For two decades she'd driven it to the holy trinity: Safeway, the post office, and the Caledonia Methodist Church. 23,000 miles. Mint, except for some rust, and free, or so I thought.

Soon, I was called upon to run small errands. In time, my duties grew. One morning, I was summoned to take Zelia to her cardiology appointment. Patsy, her nurse at assisted living, wheeled her to the wagon, and tucked her into the passenger's seat.

"See you at supper, Mrs. Woods," she said and patted her hand flat against the window to say good-bye.

Patsy had sprayed Zelia's hair a bit, which looked odd, like a fluff of cotton candy. Usually, Zelia wore it parted simply on the side with a tidy row of bangs. Teased up like this, her scalp shone through, pink and alive.

"Thank you for taking me to the farm, dear," Zelia said with a sigh.

"The farm?" I said. Sly old Zelia. Her face was mapped with creases so deep you had to study her features to see what she used to look like. Her eyes were the color of new leaves. I tapped my fingers on the steering wheel. Zelia and I were now both too old for my mother's scoldings. I'd languished that summer, bored to a stupor. I earned some money babysitting for women in Forest View who dressed in silk shantung to play bridge and drink with one another. Absurd. The world was absurd, my new favorite word, and I pronounced the s like a z, which I'd picked up from plump Mrs. Sterling, who'd once lived in Stockholm for an entire year, and seemed impossibly sophisticated.

"All right, Zelia," I said. What were forty miles and a missed appointment?

As a child, the farm seemed remote, an interminable journey from rolling green field to rolling green field. Now it was traffic and stores and fumes. The farms were gone, subdivided and replaced with houses so close together you could almost pass the sugar from one kitchen window to another.

Along the way to her old farm, Zelia told me of her marriage to Henry Woods, and of their glorious month-long honeymoon across the Southeast. Henry had arranged to stop at successful farms along the way to learn from more experienced farmers. Some gave him seeds, which he labeled and placed in coffee cans. At the end of the final visit, an old farmer and his wife dug up a sapling from their orchard as a wedding gift, a Black Limbertwig apple tree.

Henry, she said, tended that tree as if his success as a farmer depended upon it. He picked a spot somewhat sheltered from the wind, dug the hole, softened the soil, then gently flayed the roots with his thumbnail. Their soil wasn't rich, so when the limbs seemed to droop as it grew Zelia was concerned, but not Henry. By the second winter, it had fruit buds. The third summer, it fruited. That fall he took a photo: his lovely Zelia with a perfect Black Limbertwig apple, the first ever in Caledonia. Eight months later their first girl, Rose, was born.

I started to tremble as Zelia and I got closer to the old Woods' farm, until I understood that my mother's persistent refusals were generous. What good could come from replacing Zelia's cherished memories with the terrible fact of its ruin? I pretended to be lost, killing time until I became so turned around I had to stop for directions at a small, two-pump general store on the outskirts of town. Beside the store was a field that needed bush-hogging. Orange daylilies ran wild in the ditches. There was a derelict barn, and beyond it, like a blessing, a small orchard, the trees gnarled and blighted, but still fruiting.

"Look, Zelia," I said. "Limbertwigs." I couldn't walk her to the trees, so she waited in the wagon as I trudged through the field, trespassing. I picked as many apples as I could carry in the front of my untucked shirt. Her old Estate smelled of cider the whole drive back.

When I returned to assisted living with Zelia, my mother was waiting outside beside Patsy. She flew out to the parking lot in a purple-lipped fit, but when she saw Zelia dozing with the unripe apples in her lap, she quietly opened the back door and slid in behind me. We shared one of those tart, rough-skinned apples right there, while Zelia snored and the engine ticked in the heat. Tears poured down my mother's face. I wasn't quite sure what to make of them.

I saved those seeds and used them over the years to start three separate orchards. Are they Henry's Black Limbertwigs? Why, they must be, for when I gather those apples and close my eyes, there's my mother and there's Zelia — conjured clearer than any memory — almost close enough to touch.

Catamount

Story by Ross Howell Jr. · Photograph by Lynn Donovan

Whit added honey to the chai, tapped the spoon on the sink and carried the mug to the glass doors overlooking the gorge.

His wife sat on the deck in a chair by the railing. She was wearing his wool coat and cap with earflaps from his years at Bowdoin. Her pink bandanna peeked from under the cap.

He cracked the door.

"Robyn?" he said. "Won't you come in? It's cold as the bejesus."

Her face was pale.

"No," she said. "I like it." The mug steamed the glass.

He stepped outside and handed her the tea.

"See if it's all right," he said.

She took the mug and sipped, then smiled and nodded.

"Perfect," she said. She pointed to the sky. Her mitten looked like a big paw. "See the belt?" she asked.

He saw three stars in a row.

"Yes," he said. "Orion, the hunter."

She sipped, cradling the mug with her mittens.

"I heard it again," she said. "Just now."

"Maybe it was the windmill," he said. "Thing's rusty as hell."

"No wind," she said. "Still as the grave. I'm just telling you."

"Sweetie, there haven't been panthers in these mountains for generations."

His ears stung. He rubbed his hands together.

"I'm freezing," he said. "Let's go inside."

"In a little," she said.

She turned as he opened the door. Her eyes were bright.

"Funny how it can come back," she said.

"You're doing great," he said. "All the doctors say so. Don't freeze out here."

She smiled.

"All right," she said.

He went to the sink and rinsed the spoon. He put the chai and honey in the cabinet. He went to the fireplace, poked the embers, and added two split pieces of oak. Splinters crackled. Sparks glittered as they rose from the hearth.

He looked out the glass doors. The mug was sitting on the rail. The chair was empty.

"Jesus," he said. He grabbed a wool cap and threw on his down vest. He flung open the door.

"Robyn?" he called. "Robyn?"

He trotted down the stairs of the deck, stumbled on a root at the base of the steps. He'd forgotten the damn flashlight.

"Robyn?"

Then he heard it. In the gorge, the mewling of a child.

"Jesus," he said. He started to run. Briars tore at his fingers and vest. Branches whipped his face. He burst through a thicket into a clearing.

Robyn stood in the middle, her back to him. She clutched his cap and the bandanna in a mitten. Her bare pate undulated in the moonlight.

Beyond her, he saw darkness crouched. The evanescence of breath. Pure white fangs.

"Robyn!" he shouted.

The big cat vanished.

She turned to him, her face the one he'd fallen in love with when she was a girl.

"Did you see, Whit?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

"I wasn't afraid," she said. "I wasn't afraid at all."

Come Saturday Morning

STORY BY BILLY INGRAM · PHOTOGRAPH BY GINNY JOHNSON

They say before death, life passes before your eyes. So it was for William Binder Batson II as he dismissed well-meaning hospice workers in order to leave this world on his own terms.

Breathing reduced to a death rattle, William reflected on what had been a hardscrabble existence from the very beginning. Orphaned as a toddler, he went to work while still in elementary school, hawking newspapers on one of Manhattan's busiest intersections. Hardly his fault when the naive youngster was lured by a shadowy figure into a dark, deserted portion of the nearby subway station where he was met by six wise and powerful men who were well-meaning in their generosity but the out-of-body experience left him confounded and conflicted.

The incident that followed left the boy with what might charitably be called the most severe case of split personality imaginable. He escaped into a world where jungle cats spoke to him in aristocratic English; a warped consciousness in which even a tiny earthworm was perceived as a dire threat with malevolent intent.

It wasn't until he turned 15 that William's life took a turn for the better after he met a kindly older gentleman who offered the troubled teen his tutorage, teaching him how to trust again. They spent the better part of the 1970s traveling country backroads in a custom Winnebago; at each stop they found a way to enrich the lives of strangers. This impressed the young man who also appreciated that this unlikely patron called him by his boyhood nickname, "Billy." Anthropomorphic animals and insects no longer plagued his mind.

The two eventually settled into a farmhouse outside a small town in Kansas, the older man tilling soil while William took a job at a family-owned hardware store. Townfolk admired the clean-cut lad who, they noticed, never cursed; closest he ever came was referring to "the 'S' word," one that will never pass from his lips again. How respectful, everyone thought. Why, then, was it he never found the right girl or never managed to have any close relationships? Almost as if there was a secret held close, one so awesome he dare not share it with anyone other than the elderly man that took him in and accepted, without judgment, what he was capable of.

It was barely six months ago that William (nobody had called him Billy since his mentor passed away) was given the terrible diagnosis: terminal cancer of the liver. With health rapidly deteriorating, he began to confront the reality of his tenuous mortality and consider what life after death might entail.

So it came to be that, with no more than a few breaths remaining, William Batson spoke that word he had avoided since his teen years. In an instant, thunder rumbled the floorboards beneath his bed, a bolt of lightning sent down by the gods pierced the ceiling and the dying man vanished, in his place stood a virile collegiate athlete in a bright red bodysuit.

Ironically, this revitalized individual can never speak "the 'S' word" William ended his life with. For if Captain Marvel ever utters the word "Shazam" he'll revert back to Billy Batson and Billy Batson is dead.

Soup's On

Story by Maria Johnson

Photograph by Sam Froelich

Clear down to the river, Ashe could hear the public radio talk show wafting from the mountain cabin that his family rented every summer.

A radio-show caller was talking about how she'd a picked a peck of peaches, which was more than she bargained for. She wanted the show's host, a lady with a rich deep voice that reminded Ashe of his pillar-like Aunt Terry, to tell her what to do with the remainders.

"Do you know what would be really good?" the Aunt Terry soundalike said.

"What?" said the caller.

"Peach soup," said Aunt Terry.

"Peach soup?" said the caller. "I've never heard of peach soup."

"THAT'S BECAUSE NO ONE EATS PEACH SOUP!" hollered Ashe's mother, who was up in the cabin. The Aunt Terry impostor went on about the peach soup.

"You don't see it very much. But I once had it in Savannah, and it was out of this world," she said. "So go to your refrigerator and get some coconut water and some fresh ginger, then take your food processor and . . ."

"OH! OH! COCONUT WATER AND FRESH GINGER! WELL, JUST LET ME LOOK IN THE CRISPER! HONEST TO GOD. . ." hollered Ashe's mother.

Ashe knew that, as much as she protested, his mom would be asking if they had any coconut water and fresh ginger when she went down to the Food King this afternoon. He smiled to himself. His chin rested on his knees. His knees rested over his spongy green Crocs, which had taken on the funky metallic smell of the lake.

He and his older brother Hoke had crewed their new rubber raft all along the shore until two days ago, when a neighbor's Fourth of July bottle rocket had landed, still glowing, on the raft while it was dry-docked on a picnic table.

The boys' father was determined to mend the wound. He and Hoke had gone to the marina store in search of a patch kit. Ashe took the opportunity to go fishing by himself at the river that hooked around the cabin and emptied into the lake.

Folded up on a concrete finger that had braced a long-gone pier, Ashe cradled his grandfather's old Zebco rod and reel in front of him. A ragged mound of mosquito bite itched the back of his left hand. He scratched it with his right hand and waved off a fly.

Presently, his thoughts stilled, and particles of the present sifted down to the bedrock of memory. Cicadas thrummed the rhythm of summer. In the river's still places, Jesus bugs walked on the water. A swarm of gnats hovered over ripples. Minnows huddled on the shady side of the concrete bar. A breeze slid through the leaves. Even the air had a distinct character.

A voice popped the bubble.

"Catch anything?"

"No," said Ashe.

"Toldya," said Hoke. "C'mon, we found a patch. You can blow up the raft."

Ashe stood to reel in his line. The wet cricket at the end had stopped kicking. Ashe gently removed it from the hook.

The cricket would not die in vain, Ashe decided. It would find new life when Hoke unearthed it in a bowl of peach soup tonight.

Play Again

STORY BY JIM MORIARTY · PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GESSNER

Vickie Wilkes was a summer girl.

The Smith brothers, Billy and Er-Er, knew when to expect her the way water knows when to boil. She was from Lake City, not Gypsy, where they lived. Just like a lot of people from across the water, she spent the hot months in a cottage on the shore, building fires on the beach and Saturday nights at the amusement park. Every summer Vickie Wilkes got a little taller, a little blonder and a little, well, bigger. This escaped the notice of exactly no one, in particular Billy and Er-Er, a set of twins so similar the only way to tell them apart was because one of them had trouble pulling the starting cord on his sentences and no one liked the name Um-Um.

They watched each other eat cherry sno-cones, biting off the tips at the bottom of the paper holders to suck out the last drops. They rode three abreast on the old wooden roller coaster that moaned so badly it sounded like it was about to die of exhaustion. And they ran for the new attraction, the bumper cars with the tall poles that had floppy metal tongues on top that licked the ceiling and gave off sparks. Billy and Er-Er believed they'd scouted out which cars were the fastest ones and made straight for them the second the gate opened to make sure Vickie Wilkes got trapped in one of the slow jobs they could bang into over and over again.

"Hey," Billy said when the three of them came stumbling out of the cage of cars. "Look at that." He pointed at Madam Magian, the fortune telling machine straight across the midway.

Billy and Er-Er traded elbow jabs. They looked at Madam Magian. They looked at Vickie Wilkes. The Madam. The girl. They couldn't believe they hadn't seen it before.

"What?" Vickie asked.

"Um, um, you're just alike," Er-Er said.

Now, whether Vickie Wilkes had grown into it over the winter or Madam Magian had been refurbished in the off-season, there was no denying the blonde in the glass case looked as close to a dead ringer for the girl from Lake City as Billy looked like Er-Er.

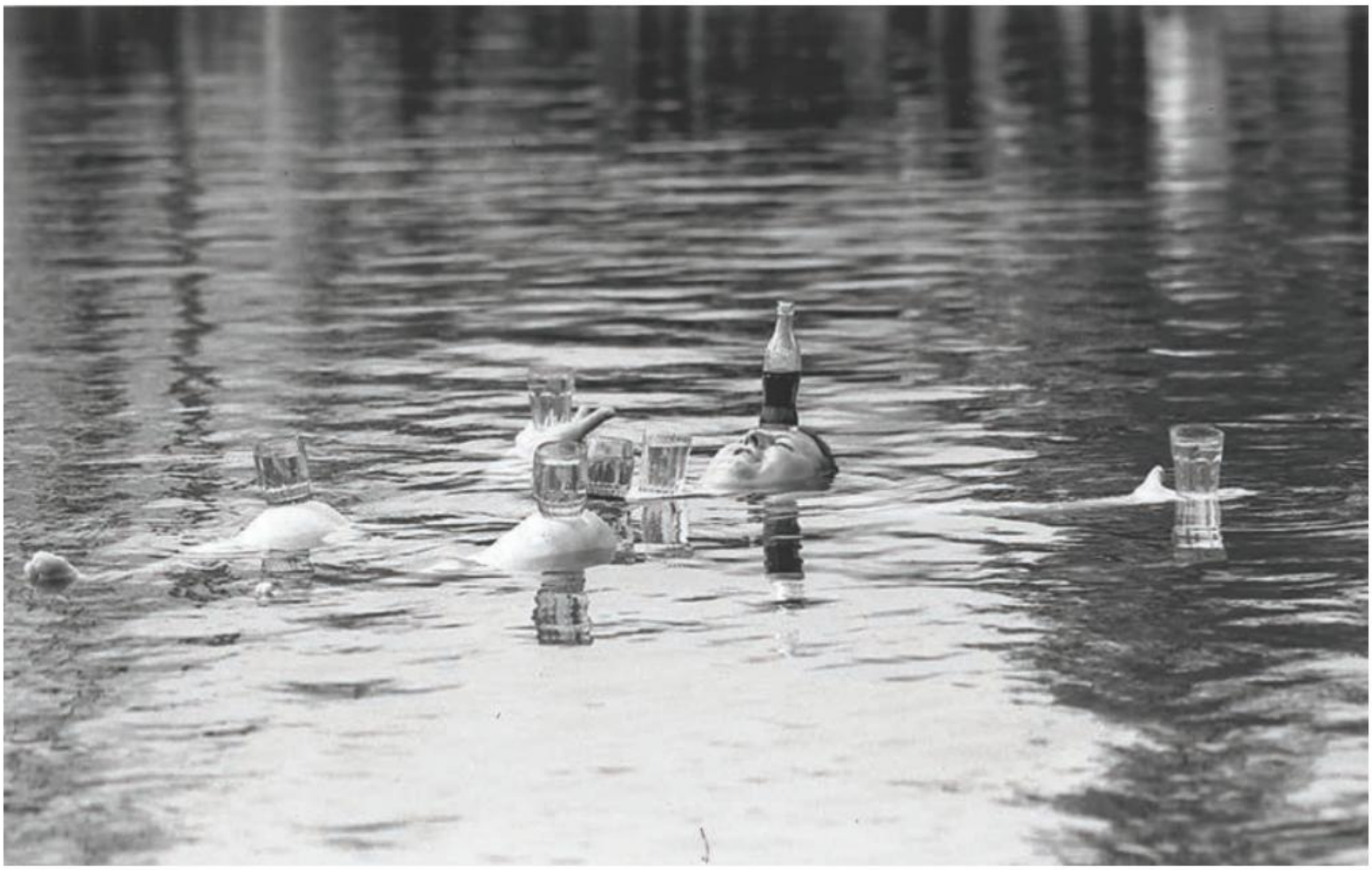
"Do not," Vickie protested in defense of her humanity.

"Do, too," Billy said.

"Why, why don't we ask *her*?" Er-Er said. They ran to Madam Magian. Billy put a quarter in and cranked the handle, two turns, like a gumball machine. The crystal ball glowed from underneath. Gears meshed deep inside like a gastrointestinal disorder. The fortune-teller's satin-covered arm hovered above the magic cards in front of her, moving back and forth until it clunked into place. The forefinger of fate with its red nail polish — for that was the color fate always came in — stabbed the Queen of Wands. A small card appeared in the slot below. Vickie used both hands to pinch the corners and pull it out.

> The crystal gazer sees a great deal
> of happiness in store for you. Twice
> as much to look at, twice as much to love.
> PLAY AGAIN!

All summer. And maybe, um, um, forever.



The Mother of Invention

STORY BY STEPHEN E. SMITH · PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE TUFTS ARCHIVES

Lacey Pekerman, Reliable Used Autos' Salesman of the Month for August 1933, was seeking inner peace. He'd just sold fourteen rusty rattletraps, surpassing his nearest competitor, salesman Inky Chavis, by five clunkers, and achieving an all-time monthly record for the dealership. A drink or two and he'd be free of the karmic guilt that accompanies the sale of a used car of questionable dependability to an unsuspecting rube. Or, in this instance, fourteen unsuspecting rubes. As soon as the whisky buzz hit his prefrontal cortex, he planned on kicking back and doing what he liked to do best — float in cool water and guzzle hooch nonstop.

The Twenty-first Amendment would soon repeal Prohibition and Pekerman would no longer have to do his drinking alone on a scum-covered pond, but for now he was content to lull away the hours without the annoyance of unwanted company or a surprise visit from Eliot Ness and the Untouchables. To that end, his agile mind, always quick to grasp the possible, had conceived a means by which he could avoid leaving the water to refill his glass with moonshine or grab his favorite chaser, a lukewarm Coca-Cola.

A man of greater ambition and lesser intelligence might have constructed a small raft from an inner tube and a few stray boards and placed his drinks and chaser on top. But that option would have required effort, a commodity which Pekerman never expended without discomfort. No, he'd come up with a better plan. If he did not have access to a bar he could belly up to, he would turn his belly into a bar. After all, a man of his bulk was as buoyant as a blimp and could bob effortlessly in calm water for hours on end.

Had Pekerman been familiar with the principles of Archimedes, he might have cried "Eureka!" as he slipped off his clothes, reclined in the cool water and began balancing the first two brimming tumblers on his knobby knees. From there the plan evolved of its own volition. He placed the cola bottle on his forehead, two more glasses balanced themselves nicely on his slightly distended belly, and the remaining tumblers he held in his open palms. Flexing his ample buttocks, he propelled himself gently into the center of the pond where he floated languidly, sunlight reflecting off the glistening glassware — and for a moment, one blessed moment, he achieved a state of Nirvana-like tranquility.

Then he heard a car pull off the road and the driver and passenger scramble down the embankment to the edge of the pond. "Who's there?" Pekerman asked.

"It's Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker," a man's voice answered. "What the hell are you doing?

"I'm balancing glasses of whisky," Pekerman yelled back.

"Do what?" Bonnie asked. "Don't you have a job?"

"Yeah," Pekerman answered, "I'm a crackerjack used car salesman."

"Well," Clyde said, "this calls for a little target practice."

That's when Lacey Pekerman recognized the unmistakable click-clack of a pump-action shotgun.

Silence of the Frogs

Story by Serena Brown · Photograph by Ned Leary

"Hello?"

"Oh, Shelby, hi, it's Beth. Thank goodness you're there. Will you do me a big favor?"

"Of course. What do you need?"

"Will you run out and look at the end of our drive? We left a load of stuff out there for the trash men, well, anyone really, to pick up. Can you see if we left a white, stuffed dog? If it's still there?"

"Yep. No problem. Let me just pick up a flashlight and I'll walk down there now. You still on the road?"

"No. We pulled off for the night about an hour ago. Yes, honey, I'm talking to her right now. Mommy will be off the phone in just a minute. No. No *Dora* now, it's too late. OK, one episode. Just one. Excuse me, Shelby, yes, we're in a motel. The Star Mountain one."

"Which now?"

"Oh, no, sorry Shel, not us. I was talking to Jennifer. Star Mountain's in her TV show. We're somewhere in Georgia, I think. Maybe Tennessee. There was a state line we crossed round about dark. Then Jennifer started fussing. It wasn't but ten minutes ago but it feels like ten hours. Oh, I can hear the frogs at your end. I miss them already."

"You don't have frogs there?"

"I don't know. Not where we are right now anyway. All I can hear is Nickelodeon. Ow!"

"Sorry love, I was whistling for Boyce. Damn dog's made a break for the Stevens' trash. Boyce!"

"Did it stop raining?"

"Yeah. Pretty soon after you left. BOYCE!"

"Shel?"

Rustle shuffle rustle. "BOYCE!" Shuffle rustle rustle. "BOYCE! Get your ass back here!"

"Shel. Are you there?"

"Yeah. Hi. The Stevenses throw out a lot of food."

"Oh."

"What else do you need?"

"When you get to our house, can you go round to the dog kennel?"

"Did y'all forget the dog?"

"I think we've got him. I don't know anymore. I don't know why we had a kennel, he never went in there. Anyway, on the tree behind it there's a birdhouse. There's a keepsake box inside it. Please, will you take it out and burn it?"

"BOYCE!"

"Shelby? There's a box in the birdhouse. Please burn it."

"Surely."

"Thank you, Shel. Thank you. I'd better go. I need to work out where we're heading tomorrow."

"Your stuffed animal's here. Boyce has got it now. BOYCE! Drop it!"

"It's OK. He can keep it."

"Thanks. His tail's wagging. Boyce, not the animal. But he looks pretty happy too."

"Good. Thanks, Shel."

"Anytime. I'll say goodbye now, but I'm going to hang up back at the house so you can hear the frogs, OK?"

"Yeah. Bye, Shel."

"Goodbye, Beth. Send a postcard. Here are the frogs."

Brand New Me

Story by Maggie Dodson · Photograph by Tim Sayer

Dear Rob,

I got your postcard from rehab. It looks like a very restorative location. I suppose it makes sense that sweeping views of the ocean and 24-hour hot yoga have incredible healing properties. I sure do wish you'd send some of those properties my way to repair the hole you punched in my wall.

Gratefully no longer yours,

Penny

Dear Karen,

Operation self-love is in full effect. Yesterday I burned all of Rob's old shirts and ate not one — but four brownies. They were divine. On Mom's advice I took up Web therapy and started chatting with a woman named Promise. She seems promising. And expensive.

Later, on a drive through the south side of town, the sun was shining, Jimmy Buffett was on the radio, and I stopped by a garage sale and picked up a box of dumbbells. Maybe my dream of becoming a weightlifting, buff-goddess is in my future after all. Who knew?

Give Jo-Jo a kiss for me.

Xo

Penny

Dear Amazon Customer Service,

I wanted to reach out and say "thank you" to Joyce, the woman who answered my phone call on Sunday evening and endured the gruesome details of how my relationship ended in what can only be described as a fiery ball of hell. I didn't mean to break down over my purchase of bedazzled magenta curtains, but Joyce met my sobs with patience, kindness and wisdom. She offered advice, noting that the healing process takes time, comes in many shapes and forms and that there's always solace in a big piece of apple pie. Human kindness can be hard to come by these days, especially in the world of online shopping, but Joyce's sweetness will stick with me. You've got a great woman on your customer-care team.

Also, thank you for the full refund. On further thought, plain white curtains were better suited to my tastes and less glaring.

A satisfied customer,

Penny

Dear Application Manager,

I am writing in relation to the two cats up for adoption on the Furry Friends website, Betty Friedan and Judy Bloom. I'm in the midst a personal journey and though I've taken it in stride — new job, new hair color, new mindset — I find nights get lonely when adopting a new world philosophy. I feel two felines are the purrfect pair for my progressive lifestyle.

As I mentioned, I've just begun a new job and I'm thriving. Outside of work, I bake, garden, get tattoos I don't tell my mother about and recite poetry at a coffee shop downtown. I excel at feeding animals on time and letting go of things that aren't good for me. Some say I'm a force to be reckoned with but my sister says I've got a good heart . . . I just need to find a person to nurture it.

So while I'm searching for Mr. Right, Betty and Judy would bring me comfort and provide me with cuddles when I need them most.

Eagerly awaiting your response,

Penny

Old Sol and Johnny Sunflower Seed

One man's love affair with summer's essential flower

By Ross Howell Jr.

Last summer a neighbor got me thinking about sunflowers, and I put in my first seeds ever.

He was notorious for planting sunflowers near street signs, by sidewalks, or next to abandoned brick piles. He planted anywhere he discovered a patch of open ground, sometimes surreptitiously in the dead of night, earning the nickname the "Sunflower Bandit."

My neighbor prefers to think of himself as "Johnny Sunflower Seed," playing on the name of our American hero of childhood lore. And I'd say he's earned the right. Scion of an old North Carolina family whose ancestors include a legend in the hunt for Pancho Villa during the Mexican Revolution, a state senator, and a respected judge, he has served in the U.S. Navy, navigated a sailboat across the Gulf of Mexico, earned a commercial pilot's license, and was once homeless, while struggling with addiction. Now, he tends brick-edged flower beds he's fashioned with owners' permission in front of businesses and apartments along a nearby street.

He says his mother, a Louisiana girl, was the person who first got him interested in sunflowers.

"There were beds along a stone walkway at our house," he recalls. "And one spring, I think I was about 14, my mother brought me these seed packets. She said if I planted them along the walkway, they'd grow into enormous flowers." His face brightens as he recounts the event. "Well, I planted those seeds, and I'll bet I checked them every half hour to see if they'd sprouted. I watered and watered. And here grew these giant plants, eight, nine feet tall, with big yellow flowers, and everybody commented on how beautiful they were." He smiled.

"When you're a kid, things like that make an impression on you. Sunflowers are spiritual, you know?" he says. "They reach toward the sun, like they're reaching to God, and they turn their faces, following the sun, like they're following God."

I remembered, listening, that it was my mother who first got me interested in sunflowers, too. She favored the giant ones, saving their seeds for the winter feeder by her window — cardinals, chickadees, titmice and evening grosbeaks sampling the buffet as big snowflakes fell, dusting their feathers. Her sunflowers grew ten, even twelve feet tall, with seed heads so broad it seemed miraculous the plants could support them.

"Add soil as they grow," my neighbor suggests. "Say you add six inches of topsoil? That root is going to spread another ten inches."

He favors the tall, broad-shouldered yellow sunflowers. I go for the modest sizes myself, heights of five, six feet, because I like to cut flowers for my wife, Mary Leigh. This year I planted two varieties of yellow, and a red. The red sunflowers have faces of red, orange and ocher. They're more finicky than the yellow, and want more care. The reds don't stand the heat as well as the yellows, either, even if carefully watered. Still, I like working with them, and maybe I'll get better at understanding their needs.

But give the big yellow sunflowers a little water and plenty of soil, and they can take pretty much anything old Mr. Sol can beam down. And their stalks support burdens that sometimes seem impossible.

In late summer they stand tall and regal, resilient and undaunted, among flowers frumpy and withered by circumstance. That's what I like about them.

I bet that's what my neighbor likes, too.

Ross Howell Jr. is catching up on his reading, starting a new novel, and anxious to hear from readers about favorite fall or winterplants, shrubs and trees.

Falling for Bald Head

How Wilmington designer Nancy Mullineaux infused an existing beach house with joie d'vivre

By Anne Barnhill · Photographs by Rick Riccozi

Fifteen years ago, a good friend told Laura and David Hall they'd love Bald Head Island; the Kansas couple decided to check it out. As a very successful businessman, David, along with the rest of the family, wanted a private, peaceful place for some much-needed rest and recreation from their hectic lifestyle. Bald Head Island, accessible only by ferry, promised the respite the Halls needed. They flew across the country with their four daughters, Rebecca, Allison, Katie and Julia. Sure enough, after the first week, the Hall family did, indeed, fall for the charms of the island.

"Initially, we loved the isolation and the quiet, natural beauty," says Laura Hall. "The island was not overly developed and had everything we wanted. Dave plays golf, so there was that. Rebecca is a dolphin lover and a real ocean girl, Katie is into scuba diving, Julie adores the beach, and Allison is happy to have family time. At home, it's hard to find moments when we can come together as a family — everyone is so busy. Plus, there's quite a span between our oldest, 24, and our youngest, 15. That's what I love — all of us being together. There was something for everyone to enjoy at Bald Head."

About seven years ago, the Halls decided to buy a beachfront house on the island. The house came fully furnished and the family enjoyed it for a few years as it was. Then, in 2012, the Halls decided the time had come for a change. It was time to make the house truly "theirs."

"We wanted to create a more personalized space. Plus, the girls were growing up and wanted to bring their friends along for our vacations. And, we knew at some point there would be sons-in-law and grandchildren. We decided to expand the house and give it a complete do-over," says Hall.

Once the decision to remodel had been made, Hall was lucky enough to find Cothran Harris, the architect who had originally designed the house in 2004, to plan the renovation. She also contracted Parker Dudley of Dudley Builders to do the actual construction. Dudley Builders had also constructed the original house. But who to complete the team to design the interior?

Hall did what most people do when trying to decide who to hire; she looked online.

"I was researching interior designers in Charlotte, Wilmington and Myrtle Beach and just really connected with one website — Dezign Inspirations and Nancy Mullineaux," recalls Hall. "After we spoke on the phone, I knew she was the person I wanted to work with."

Mullineaux grew up in Wilmington and attended The Art Institute in South Florida, where, after graduation, she spent twelve years honing her

craft. Then, she expanded her business in Boca Raton to Wilmington. She's no stranger to beach life.

"I've always been interested in color and texture. At first, I worked in clothing, but then decided to take my passion into interior design," says Mullineaux.

Mullineaux's design philosophy is personal approach. Perhaps her experience with clothing allowed her to bring the idea of personal expression into dressing a whole house. One look at her website portfolio illustrates how unique each of her designs are; from beach houses to more formal homes, they stand alone. She doesn't repeat the same tropes of what's hot in interior design, but strives to reinvent each house to fit the owner's lifestyle and tastes.

"First, I'm very interested in color — it affects everything we do. We wear color, we eat color and we surround ourselves with color. Color tempers our moods. And each person has a different set of colors that appeals to her. I take an individual approach — every project is different because every person is different. I want to create a sanctuary that is tranquil and soothing for that individual," Mullineaux explains, while giving me a tour of her designs in the Halls' house.

Because of her focus on the client's personality and desires — for example, incorporating a beloved family heirloom that might not fit into a modern design, Mullineaux will make it work, even if it means extra hours and thinking outside the box. Her interiors are tailored to the passions of the people who will be living in the home. This quality is one Laura Hall found compelling when she was searching for the right designer.

"I loved working with Nancy. I communicated my desires by talking to her — she really listens and had a good way of asking just the right questions. We went through millions of sample fabrics to make sure every room started with a fabric I loved," says Hall.

Fabric color, texture and pattern: These are elements Mullineaux employs

with an artist's hand. Tons of pillows adorn couches, beds and chairs — not one of them the same pattern. Mixing so many patterns could be considered busy if not combined just right, but in the Hall house, it all works. The vibrant colors and bold fabrics energize the rooms, adding to the atmosphere of play the Halls wanted. The pillows give the home a feminine feel — which makes sense, seeing as there are five women to one man. But Dave Hall had only one request for his own comfort: He wanted a television set at the foot of the bed in the master bedroom. Not against the wall, not hanging like a picture, but exactly at the foot of the bed. Of course, he got what he wanted.

"I wanted everything to be comfortable. I wanted us to relax in furniture that was comfy," says Laura Hall. In the name of client and designer partnership, Hall and Mullineaux made an inspiration field trip to the furniture market in High Point. Hall wanted to test the pieces she liked, to see if they were as lush as they were stylish. Spending the better part of two days looking at the latest in furniture and decorative arts helped the two women get to know each other.

Mullineaux realized this beach house would be used by young people, often wearing damp bathing suits. She chose indoor/outdoor fabric for some of the interior furniture — the dining nook, for example. The materials are bright, colorful and able to withstand the water and sand that come with beach living. You can dash in from a dip in the ocean and belly right up to dining table for lunch without thinking twice.

"It's a fun house," says Mullineaux.

And fun is exactly what the Halls want from their paradise on the coast.

"We love swimming in the ocean, watching the dolphins at play. For the most part, our family is very low key. We watch movies, walk on the beach, play gin rummy. The changes we've made to the house have made the living space more open, allowing us to gather with family and friends more comfortably," observes Hall. Of course, being right on the beach, the house lends itself to a nautical theme.

Not only do the Halls love their peaceful retreat at Bald Head, they also adore the house and the way Mullineaux has been able to bring their dreams to life.

"There isn't one inch of the house that I don't love. Nancy said she would put something I loved in every room and she did," said Hall. Treasures from the sea are scattered throughout the house. Even some of the items gathered by the family from the beach are displayed in interesting, artistic ways.

"As a result, the house fits our family," says Hall.

One of the key features of the house, besides the playful, brilliant colors in each room, is the way the furnishings reflect the natural surroundings. There are framed sea shells on the walls, a sculpture of coral, lamps made of pale blue glass that resemble running water, sea horses, a driftwood wine holder — even the backsplash in the kitchen is made of coral stone. One look at the interior of the house lets the Halls know "We're not in Kansas anymore."

The kitchen is spectacular and is one of the rooms that has been expanded in the renovation. The distressed cabinets add to the charm and help the cohesiveness of the entire décor, where many of the tables, dressers and chairs also share the distressed feature.

"I like to mix materials. I'll use a lamp with an iron stand or a table with a stone top. But you'll see those features reflected elsewhere in the house," says Mullineaux. "Often, a renovation represents a new chapter in a person's life. I want to make a space that will bring them joy, whether it's a total re-do or whether they want certain pieces to remain in the house. I'll find a way to make it work."

Each bedroom's color scheme reflects the choice of each of the daughters: Rebecca's is orange and fuchsia, Allison's is purple, Kate's is aqua, green and orange, and the walls in Julie's room are a sandy beige. Kate's room seems to echo her love of scuba diving, while Allison's calming purple is the perfect shade for a slumber party. Each girl even has her color scheme included in the tile of her bathroom, a special treat. Even though these colors are quite different, they all work together to coordinate with the shades and hues from the downstairs area. With Hall's approval, Mullineaux selected and custom-designed everything throughout the home — from upholstery, window treatments and rugs down to artwork, lamps and towels.

The inside of the house invokes a sense of play, but the outside offers just as much space for relaxing and enjoying the amazing view. At the entryway, there is a commodious porch running the length of the house. At one end, you'll find a sherbet-colored couch and chairs, with a table centering the arrangement. On the other, plush rockers in similar, delicious shades. On the ocean side of the house, a shaded porch offers a table for picnicking or a large deck with sunning chairs. One end of the deck leads to a screened gazebo with lounging available inside on the main attraction: an oversized custom-made porch swing unlike any you've ever seen. Hanging by bulky ropes from the ceiling, this couch-sized swing could easily seat four. The ropes bring to mind sailing vessels, and the colors reflect the bubbly palette used throughout the house. Though the space is open, the arrangement of the furniture in small clusters promotes conversation and relationship. This house is all about family and friends drawing together for fun in the sun.

In such a house, memories are made. For the Halls, the memories include a kaleidoscope of moments: walking on the beach after dinner, watching for shooting stars from the deck, or enjoying movie night. And golf cart races.

"When the girls were younger, they were convinced they could run faster than the golf carts. We would spend hours in the evening having golf cart races where Dave and the girls would race me in the golf cart — everyone slept well on those nights," remembers Hall.

Of course, like all of us, some of the memories are bittersweet.

"Our favorite memory is one from a few summers ago when my mother-in-law visited for the first time." says Hall. "Over the years, we'd seen many turtle nests hatch — something that never gets old. But we had never seen a turtle lay her eggs. One night, we were walking after dinner and stumbled upon a laying turtle. No one was more thrilled than my mother-in-law. Sadly, she died suddenly just a few months later. We hold that memory close to our hearts."

It takes a special team to create a place where memories can be made — architect, builder, designer and owner — and this team has made this particular house a home. Like many teams, the people involved, especially Hall and Mullineaux, have become close. The pair worked together for three years to perfect the Halls' vacation home.

It's not the colors, textures or fabrics that stick out most to Hall. "Nancy's strongest point as a designer is the relationship she builds with her clients," she maintains.

Mullineaux's artistic skills are many, but she relies on her receptivity. "Everyone is different, like a grain of sand, having unique tastes and ideas. I listen and we get to know one another. It's a very personal process and I approach each house as if it were my own — a person's home should bring joy."

ALMANAC

August

By Ash Alder

Welcoming the Harvest

August is a poem you can taste. Swollen fruit beckons us to the garden, the orchard, the roadside stand, and for some of us, the trailing vines that wind along the woodland path. The air intoxicates us with notes of wild honey and dandelion. Damselflies dance between milkweed and goldenrod, fiery sunsets fade into star-studded twilight, and come nightfall, the crickets and katydids gift us with song. Nothing gold can stay, they lament.

And so we savor each delicious moment. The Wheel of the Year, an annual cycle of eight seasonal festivals (or sabbats) observed by modern pagans, includes a grain harvest celebration called Lammas (loaf mass) on August 1. Also called August Eve, the first harvest festival of the year includes a feast of thanksgiving, the first sheaf of wheat ritually baked into a sacred loaf said to embody the spirit of the grain. Regardless of which seasonal festivals you choose to observe, now's as good a time as any to consider the abundance of the season, especially when you're slicing that thick Cherokee Purple for the perfect 'mater sandwich. And as you sow your autumn garden — beets, carrots, peas and greens — try whispering a little song of thanks into the soil and see what follows: a new delicious season of magic, no doubt. Another harvest. But for now, listen to the katydids.

Starry Eyed

The gladiolus, or 'sword lily,' is the birth flower of August. Bright and showy, they symbolize a heart "pierced with love."

Astronomically speaking, there's a lot to pierce the heart with love this month: the Perseid meteor shower, for instance, which happens August 11–13 and is visible worldwide. Predawn is the best time to see it, and since the quarter moon will have set by 1 a.m., the dark sky should be an ideal canvas for this (pardon) stellar show.

Native Americans called the full moon of August the "Sturgeon" or "Green Corn" moon. On August 18, see what you're inspired to call it. And if you're prone to set intentions, the full moon is prime time. It's also a good night for onion braiding, an ancient way to store bulbs pulled from the garden in late July. Some believe that onion braids offer protection, but they're simply lovely. You need no reason more.

"August rain: the best of the summer gone, and the new fall not yet born. The odd uneven time."

— Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*

Taste of Summer

National Peach Month is here. A fun fact: True wild peaches (small and sour) are only found in China, where the fruit is said to have mystical properties and grant longevity to those who eat them. Our peaches (plump and sugary) have magical qualities, too. Don't believe it? Sink your teeth into a just-picked one and see if you don't grin like a sweet-toothed squirrel.

Also, August 3 marks National Watermelon Day. Slice one for a picnic in the backyard, where the kids can make a sport of seed spitting. Since watermelons are more than 90 percent water, they're a tasty way to help stay hydrated on hot summer days. Slip them into salads and salsas, or treat yourself to something even sweeter, like a mint and watermelon soda float. The following recipe (and a delicious homegrown watermelon) came from a friend:

Fresh Mint and Watermelon Float

2 1/2 cups fresh watermelon chunks
12–15 fresh mint leaves, coarsely chopped
12 oz club soda or carbonated water
Vanilla ice cream

In a blender, combine watermelon, mint and water. Blend and pulse quickly for 30–60 seconds (or until watermelon breaks down). The blending will "de-carbonate" the water, but it should still have some fizz. Pour mixture through a fine mesh strainer into a large bowl to remove seeds. Fill two glasses with vanilla ice cream and pour watermelon soda over top. Garnish with additional fresh mint. Serves two.

Arts Calendar

Keller Williams Performs

8/5

Battleship 101

8/13

Kayaking Adventure

8/16

8/1 Word Weavers
7–9 p.m. A Christian writer's group, which strives to mentor writers by offering critiques, workshops and retreats and keeping members informed about conferences and writing opportunities. Life Point Church, 3534 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 619-7344 or sondradron@bellsouth.net.

8/3–21 Musical Theater
8 p.m. (Wednesday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). *The Will Rogers Follies* casts Will Rogers' story as a Ziegfeld Follies production and cleverly presents Will's life by means of glittering showgirls, rope tricks and show-stopping production numbers. Admission: $24–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

8/4 Sounds of Summer
6:30–8 p.m. The Imitations close the "Sounds of Summer" concert series in Wrightsville Beach. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

8/5 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. BLP joins the Airlie Gardens summer concert series performing dance music. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.airliegardens.org.

8/5 BAC Concert
8 p.m. American musician and "one-man jam band" Keller Williams performs live at Brooklyn Arts Center. Admission: $25–40. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

8/5–7 Port City Rib Fest
11 a.m. – 11 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 12–7 p.m. (Sunday). National BBQ and music festival featuring world champion pit masters, live music, kids' zone, karaoke and a market place. North Waterfront Park, 1000 N. Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (336) 707-9188 or www.portcityribfest.com.

8/6 Zumba for Kids
10 a.m. Licensed Zumba kids instructor Shirley Melito teaches a 45-minute class for kids ages 6-12. Pre-registration is required. Myrtle Grove Public Library, 5155 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6393 or www.nhclibrary.org.

8/7 Grooves in the Grove Concert
5 p.m. Fall concert series held at Poplar Grove Plantation. This evening's performance features the mountain top music of Straits Haven. Coolers and picnics welcome. Admission: $5. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org.

8/7 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Lynne & the Wave join the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series performing rock, pop, blues, jazz and crossover country. Bring blankets and snacks. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Summer Flashlight Tour

8/20

Donavon Frankenreiter Performs

8/20

Sunrise Ocean Flow Yoga

Mondays

8/8 & 9 Youth Nature Program
10 a.m. – 11 p.m. Children discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Bugs." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/10 Airlie Gardens Bird Walk
8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff and Airlie environmental educators for a relaxed bird walk around Airlie Gardens. Admission: $3–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/11 Jazz at the Mansion
6:30–8:30 p.m. Vanessa Lynch joins the "Jazz at the Mansion" concert series on the Bellamy lawn. Beer and wine cash bar on site. Admission: $12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

8/11–14 Live Theater
7:30 p.m. Thalian Association presents *The Mercy Seat*, continuing Neil LaBute's unflinching fascination with the often brutal realities of the war between the sexes. Admission: $13.75. Red Barn Studio Theatre, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-1788 or www.thalian.org.

8/12 Pleasure Island Concerts
6:30–8:30 p.m. South of K joins the Pleasure Island's summer concert series performing bluegrass. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

8/13 Battleship 101
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Volunteers engage visitors in the subjects of gunnery, radar, sickbay, gallery, engineering and daily shipboard life. Admission: $6–14. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

8/13 Native Plant Sale
2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be out on the sidewalk with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdandgardeninc.com.

8/13 Purple Heart Dinner
5–8 p.m. Celebration/dinner to honor area Purple Heart recipients. Includes guest speaker and a chance to meet local heroes. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5101 or www.businessmadecasual.com.

8/16 Kayaking Adventure
5:30–9:30 p.m. Masonboro Island Eco-Tour with Kayak Eco-Tours. Admission: $45. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

8/17 Southport Bird Walk

8:30–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff for a free bird walk around Southport's historic district and waterfront. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/19 & 20 Seaglass Salvage Market

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with upcycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home décor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Admission: Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

8/19 Airlie Concert

6–8 p.m. Bibis Ellison joins the Airlie Gardens summer concert series performing covers and dance music. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.airliegardens.org.

8/19 Greenfield Lake Concert

7 p.m. One of the hottest breaking bands in country music, Old Dominion performs live. Admission: $24–28. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Ampitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/20 Native Plant Sale

2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be out on the porch with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/20 Greenfield Lake Concert

6 p.m. American musician Donavon Frankenreiter performs live at Greenfield Lake. Admission: $22–25. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/20 Summer Flashlight Tour

7:30–9:30 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery led by local historians Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and superintendent Eric Kozen. Bring your own flashlight. Admission: $15. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5682 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

8/20 & 21 Wahine Classic

8 a.m. Surfing competition open to all female surfers, including pro shortboard and longboard divisions as well as amateur shortboard, longboard and stand-up paddle board. Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 465-9638 or www.wrightsvillebeachwahineclassic.com.

8/21 Boogie in the Park

5–7 p.m. The Clams join the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series performing eclectic rock. Bring blankets and snacks. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

8/22 & 23 Youth Nature Program

10 a.m. – 11 p.m. Children discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Seashells." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/24 Page to Stage

6:30 p.m. Writers, actors and producers share original works of comedy and drama with the community and encourage feedback every fourth Wednesday. Admission: Free, donations appreciated. Cameron Art Museum, Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

8/24–27 Art Show & Sale

10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Summer juried art show and sale hosted by the Landfall Foundation, featuring 100 artists working in different mediums and styles. Admission: $45–60 to register. Dye Clubhouse, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 512-6283 or landfallfoundation.org/artshow.

8/25 Monarchs & Milkweed

9–10 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden for a free program on the relationship between Monarch butterflies and milkweed. Learn all about the "Monarch Highway" and how you can support Monarch butterflies during their migration. Locally grown milkweed will be available. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/26 Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

8/26 Pleasure Island Concerts
6:30–8:30 p.m. The Cut joins the Pleasure Island's summer concert series performing popular rock. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

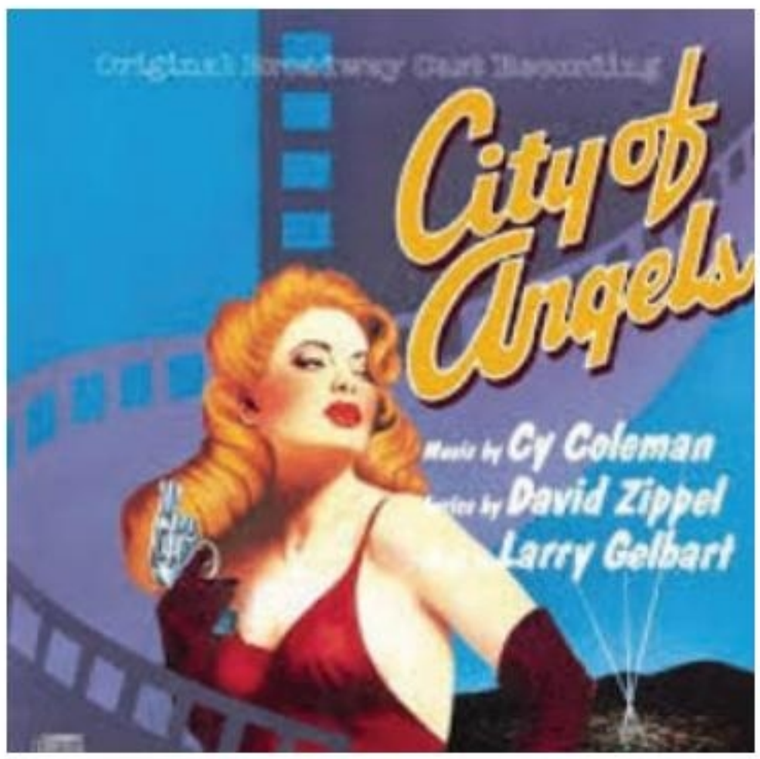
8/27 Monarchs & Milkweed
9:15–10:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden for a free program on the relationship between Monarch butterflies and milkweed. Learn all about the "Monarch Highway" and how you can support Monarch butterflies during their migration. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/27 Native Plant Sale
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Local growers will be out on the sidewalk with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/27 & 28 Hospice Gala
7 a.m. – 12 a.m. The last chance for White Pants Gala is a fundraiser for Lower Cape Fear Hospice featuring live music by We Got the Beat Band, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and a raffle. Admission: $150. Audi Cape Fear, 255 Old Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 796-8099 or www.hospiceandlifecarecenter.org/event/last-chance-for-white-pants-gala-2.

8/28 Lumina Daze
5–10 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration featuring live music by Wilmington Big Band, Dixieland All-Stars and The Imitations, dancing, live and silent auctions, and presentations of Wrightsville Beach history. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or wbmuseumofhistory.com.

8/31 – 9/11 City of Angels
8 p.m. (Wednesday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). *City of Angels* tells two intertwining stories about a writer in Hollywood struggling to turn his novel into a screenplay and the main character of the novel, a detective in search of a missing heiress. Admission: $24–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.



WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Sunrise Ocean Flow Yoga
7:30–8:30 a.m. All levels oceanfront yoga practice with instructor Tamara Cairns. Yoga mat provided. Admission: $10. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Bring It Downtown

Monday **Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Opens 5/16. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday **Up & Active!**
6–7 p.m. Join Lynne and the Wave for an hour of music, games, and fun for everyone on the Ocean Front Park lawn including face painting with P3 Planning. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Monday **Turtle Talks**
7–8 p.m. Learn about sea turtles with the local Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project. Starts August 13. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Monday – Wednesday **Films**
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday **Kure Beach Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market featuring locally grown produce and artisan crafts. Admission: Free. 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Tuesday **Wine Tasting**
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday **Cape Fear Blues Jam**
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday **Story Time by the Sea**
10–11:30 a.m. Join the Princess and her fairytale friends for story time and fun activities for boys and girls. Don't forget your camera. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Wednesday **T'ai Chi at CAM**
12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday **Evening Nature Series**
Enjoy an evening in the park with your family learning about nature. Each week a new theme will be presented. Admission: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

Wednesday **Hoop Dance Jam**
7–9 p.m. Bring your hoop and dance to some great tunes. Every skill level welcome, no experience needed. Admission: $3/class; hoops available for $35. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Wednesday **Wednesday Echo**
7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Palm Room, 11 East Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

Wednesday **Farmers' Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Wednesday). Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 Us Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday **Yoga at the CAM**
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Thursday **Boardwalk Blast Music**
6:30–9:30 p.m. Family-friendly concerts at the boardwalk featuring a sunset fireworks display. 8/4: The Dew Drops & Southern Trouble; 8/11: L Shape Lot; 8/18: BigTime; 8/25: Lynne & the Wave. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

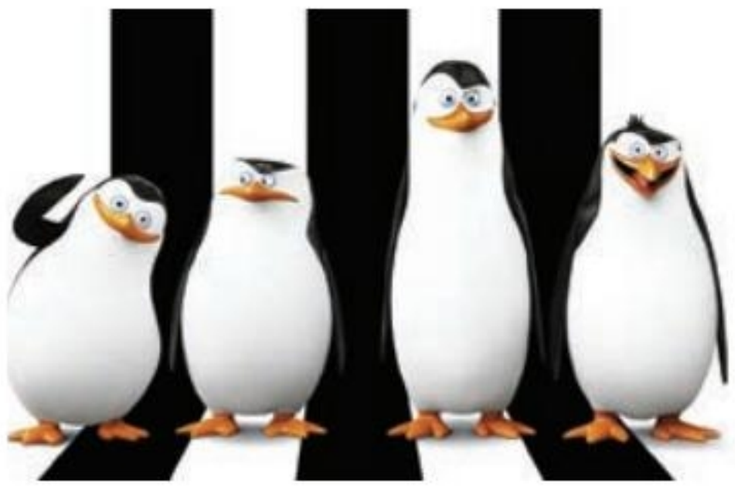
Thursday **Farmers Market**
3–7 p.m. (Thursday). Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Friday **Downtown Sundown**
6–10 p.m. Free downtown concert series overlooking the Cape Fear River. 8/5: Slippery When Wet (Bon Jovi tribute); 8/12: Same As It Ever Was Talking Heads tribute); 8/19: Skydog (Allman Brothers tribute); 8/26: Tuesday's Gone (Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute). Admission: Free. Parking lot at the corner of Princess & Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-7349 or www.downtownsundown.com.

Friday & Saturday **Dinner Theater**
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents Joel Finsel's *Cocktails & Conversations*. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3NOW or theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday **Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, meats, wines, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday **Riverfront Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.



Sunday **Movie at the Lake**
8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening by the lake. Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. 8/7: *Norm of the North* (2016, PG, 1h 30 min.); 8/14: *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs 2* (2013, G, 1h 35 min.); 8/21: *Penguins of Madagascar* (2014, PG, 1h 32 min.); 8/28: *Mr. Hobs Takes a Vacation* (1962, PG, 1h 56 min.). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

Sunday **Bluewater Waterfront Music**
4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on the waterfront patio. Admission: Free. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact saltmagazine.calendar@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

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18	Airlie Gardens	30	Island Passage
2	Alexander Koonce, Intracoastal Realty	38	Jeffrey Karnes Photography at Blue Moon Gift Shops
14	Bird Decorative Hardware & Bath	30	Ladyfingers Gourmet at Blue Moon Gift Shops
10	Blockade Runner Beach Resort	18	Leisure World Casual Furniture
70	Bluewater Surfaces	8	Michelle Clark, Intracoastal Realty
24	Brightmore of Wilmington	23	Michele Simpson, DDS
25	Business NC Magazine	23	Nest Fine Gifts and Interiors
IBC	Buzzy Northen Team, Intracoastal Realty	35	North State Bank
33	Carolina Arthritis	29	Opulence of Southern Pines
28	CoolSweats	67	Outdoor Equipped
20	Coltrane Jazz Festival	18	Palm Garden
26	Craige & Fox, PLLC	6	Paysage Home
16	Crescent Moon	36	Paws & Claws Animal Hospital, P.C.
71	Dabb Brothers Custom Pools	24	Pier House Group, The
71	Davis Community, The	72	Poplar Grove Plantation
28	DeBruhl's of Wilmington	6	Port City Java
30	Eclipse Artisan Boutique	16	Re-Bath of Wilmington
30	En Vie Interiors	70	Repeat Boutique
26	Fabric Solutions	5	RiverLights
BC	Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery	77	RiverPlace
70	Fibrenew	22	Thalian Association
3	First Bank	20	Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.
22	Fisherman's Wife, The	26	Uptown Market
40	Foreign Cars Italia	1	Vance Young, Intracoastal Realty
71	Galligan Chiropractic	38	VanDavis Aveda
67	George, The	14	Well • Spring
36	Gilt Trip Vintage Jewelry	11	WhitLauter
67	Golden Gallery, The	72	Wilmington Art Association
7	Glen Meade Center for Women's Health	38	Wilmington Blind, Shutter & Closet Company
22	Henry's Restaurant & Bar	72	Wrightsville Beach Museum
IFC	Hubbard Kitchen, Bath & Lighting Showroom		

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Upcoming Events:

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August 28 - ***20th Lumina Daze Celebration.*** A Legendary Beach Party! Under the Stars and Oceanside at Blockade Runner Resort. Cash Bar, Silent Auction, Live Music, Dancing Under the Stars with The Imitations Beach Band/Wilmington Big Band/Dixieland All-Stars Jazz Band. ***TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!! Ticket pre-sale raffle***

September 24-26 - ***Waterman Hall of Fame Induction***. Our annual recognition of local watermen and waterwomen for excellence in the water and in their community.

October 20-21 - ***Plein Air Event/Wet Paint Sale*** Join us as artists create and unveil their paintings of Wrightsville Beach.

December 10 – ***7th Annual Jingle Bell 5K Walk and Run***. Family and group rates available. Costume prizes for runners and pets! Prize for best-decorated stroller!! Historic cottages, beautiful winter marshes, and all your old haunts are part of the scenery as you experience this special 5K and support our museum.

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Wrightsville Beach, NC
910/256-2569
wbmuseum@bizec.rr.com
www.wbmuseum.com

Check us out on Facebook

Port City People

Barbecue and Bourbon Tasting
Fundraiser for rescued equine at
Poplar Grove Plantation

Sunday, June 5, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Stuart & Sheila White, Liz & Hedley Mendez

John & Meg Meyer, Paul & Gail Potito

Jot Owens, Jessica Rehfeldt, Michael Howard

Kelly & Chris Buffalino, Sandy & Craig Wilson

Emily & Mat Anderson

Cory Murphy, Olena Kilson

Jane & Bill Cash

Peggy & Milford Smith

Angel Johnson, Cassidy Pomeroy-Carter

Brian & Marci Dineen

Bill & Lilliam Kingsbury

Heather & Rodney Bowman

Port City People

75th Anniversary Celebration of United Way of the Cape Fear Area

Audi Cape Fear

Saturday, June 11, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

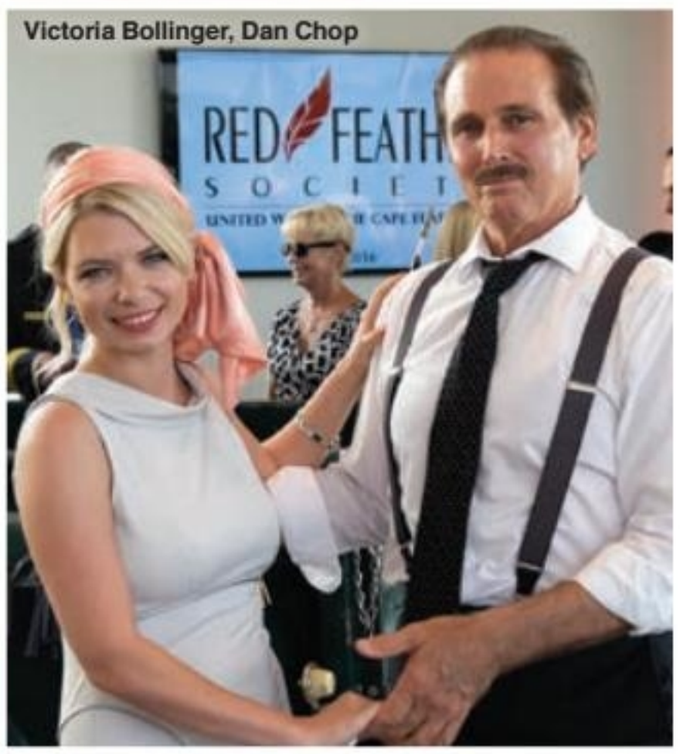
Leanne & Keith Strawn

Terry Taylor, Nick & Jillian Nelson, Nancy Nelson

Brittany Jean, Curtis Long

Dena Daniels, JC Skane

Austrin Garcia, Jessica Baltos, Sal Teta, Deborah Crowder


Victoria Bollinger, Dan Chop

Adriana Meakin,Vinny DeBetta

Bret & Bonnie Nelson

A.E. & Katie Comer, John Stephenson

Andre & Donna Santangelo, Christine Tanhueco, Dean Sasser

Chris Virta, Joan Patterson

Patricia & Walter Kusek

Port City People

Appycity 2.0 Launch Party
St .Thomas Preservation Hall

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Daniel & Brandy Born

Barbara Moore, Jan Kennedy, Thom Goolsby

Russell Eaelherr, Melissa Crete, David & Allison Paul, Drew Brown

Robert Powers, Sydney Penny, Jonathan & Jennifer Weiss

Micah & Megan Rich

Dan & Rosemary Burke, Margo Davy, Melanie Smith

Brad & Christina Jones, Abby Myles

Elaine Leggett, Rob Kaiser

Gail McCloskey, Meghan Wright

Scott Czechiewsky, Melissa Crete, Cliff Price

Mayor Bill Saffo, Ray Worrell

David & Laura Lisle, Judy Budd

Port City People

Benefit for the Good Shepherd Center of Wilmington

Saturday, June 18, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

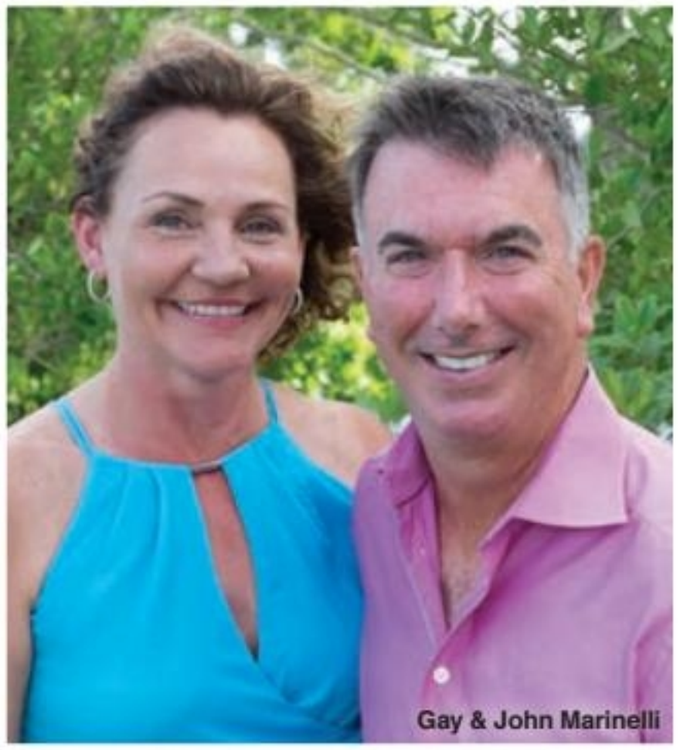
Nancy & Jim Harting

Tom Newton, Barbara Decker, Debbie Mott, Mike Newton

April & Chad Pearson

Bob & Jane Sanguinetti

Matt & Britt Thompson, Watson Barnes


Gay & John Marinelli

Kiplyn Duffy, Nancy Mihle

Michelle Thompson, Jane Birnbach, Jill Mays

Brenda Yocum, Linda Moore

Amanda Marinelli, Marty Young, Max Martin, Sarah Marinelli

Elaine & Carroll Perry

Sherri Drogue, Anna Toscane

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Port City People

July 4th Celebration

Downtown Wilmington

Monday, July 4, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Hunter Davis, Elizabeth Givens, Philip Simpson, Alexis Stone, Anna Ross Simpson

Nicole & Elaine Brill

Emily & Smith McNamara, Thom & Jan Hoagland

Back row: Dave Morris, Michael Martine, Katelyn, Paul, & April Short
Front row: Brenda Jefferson, Debbie Morris, Julie Martine, Abigail Short, Benjamin Small, Piper Martine

Jeremy, Charlie, & Kelsey Markovich

Back row: Max, John, Becky & Bryan Bukowski
Front row: Mary Beth Chaput, Dominick Skeans, Alex Uroza

Jean Davis, Linda Lovelace

Sue West, Dan Balyeat, Jaime Smith

OB & Shelby Battle

Susanna, Oscar, Albin, & Patrik Durvin, Lars, Elis, Majken, & Pernilla Johansson, Lena Durvin

Troy Power, Kallie Lowe, Meagan Castro

Jasset Stewart, Prince Grady, Chantell Treasure

Auspicious August

Have your cake – and half the icing too

By Astrid Stellanova

I've always gotten a kick out of how August-born Leos are creative types —extroverted and full of drama. But August-born Virgos are analytical types, who like working hard and being of service. This explains how come August is a lot of things to a lot of people: the month, for instance, we celebrate National Golf, Picnics, Peaches and, last but not least, Romance Awareness Month — with something for both sides of the spectrum to get a big old kick out of, Star Children. Ad astra — Astrid

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Gluttony is still a character defect, last time I checked. And when someone brings you a birthday cake, that does not mean you can scrape all the icing off, eat it till your stomach hurts and leave the plain old bald cake sitting there for everybody else. You know what you like, and once you've gone after it, you don't care one iota if that sticks in someone's craw as you swallow the last bite. Celebrate yourself, Honey Child, but remember that might mean you leave at least half the icing on the cake for your friends.

Virgo (August 23–September 22
There was a time when being retro wasn't cool. You missed that memo. Now you've grown into yourself and the time is finally right. Just keep that chin up and let everybody think you were simply way too cool to ever give a fiddle-fart what everybody else thought. Then become that person, Sugar.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Somebody ought to thank you, Captain Obvious. You have mastered the finer points of things that most people might think everyone sees. But they don't, and you know it. So be true to yourself, Child, and let the jokes roll off your straight back. Busting out with a cuss word is not a good way to exercise your vocabulary.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
It has been an uphill climb for you, you're hot and bothered, and your brain is as fried as a pork rind. Just when one weight rolls away another seems to find you. It's easy to be you, because nobody else would take the job. But it sure is going to have its perks; be patient.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)
Some think you are too big for your britches and have nowhere to hide. Maybe you are. But maybe you have the right to stand up for yourself and not be overlooked or miss being counted. Everything sure isn't what it appears. Like my bumper sticker says, honk if you love a good argument.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
You are still standing back, still wondering if you have what it takes. Seriously? Does Dolly Parton let a bad hair day keep her off the stage? No, Honey. Your life didn't start yesterday and leave you behind. It starts this very second so don't miss it.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
What's keeping you from the greatness you are born to enjoy? One degree of separation, my sweet pea. Only one. If you still want it, go for it. Unseen hands are reaching to help, and even if they are calloused, take them and dance.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Your honor student and your dog may be smarter than everybody else. But, Child, does that mean you are — all the time? Don't confuse pity with understanding. Also, don't waste your last dime buying them lottery tickets, either.

Aries (March 21-April 19)
Are pork and beans your two major food groups? Is Pigeon Forge your idea of heaven? Don't apologize. Are you sure you want to be someone other than who you really are? Bless your heart. You are just fine as you are, and pass me the Texas Pete.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
Your reasoning lately makes no kind of sense. That's like confusing collards with grits. When the whole mess in front of you is over and the collard stink clears from the room, the good news is your mind is going to clear, too. Blue skies are coming.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Does your heart go pitter-patter when you hear a Harley? Is there a part of you that won't be tamed? You let loose with the national anthem like you wrote it and make everybody smile. These passions are what make others love you, Sugar. Live your life out loud.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
There's a fine line between speaking your truth and using it like a blunt object. You scared your friends and neighbors, hollering as if that makes your argument one bit stronger. Sugar, it didn't. Elvis died in August. The *Mona Lisa* was stolen in August more than a century ago — and it took two years to recover. It's a tricky month ahead. But you don't have to take *that* long to get a grip.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Small Town Talk

There's meaning beneath and beyond the words we speak.
And something in the silence between them

By Clyde Edgerton

When I was growing up, most of the men in my family — a dozen or so uncles and older cousins — didn't talk much. A conversation on the porch on a Sunday afternoon among, say, a couple of older cousin men, my daddy, Big Clyde (my namesake uncle) and Uncle Clem would go something like this:

"I'll tell you one thing . . . that was a big tree they cut down over there."

Silence. Maybe four, five seconds. "Yeah . . . sure was."

More silence. A full minute.

"Did Benny buy that sitting lawnmower?"

"Don't think so."

Three minutes of silence. A car comes by.

Uncle Clyde sucks on one end of a toothpick while holding the other end, making a little noise between his teeth. Then he lowers the toothpick. "I don't think I'd want one."

"One what — big tree?"

"Sitting lawnmower."

Somebody yawns.

"Me neither."

More silence. A car comes by.

That's pretty much it, folks.

It was different with my mother and a couple of her sisters at the grocery store or during lunch at the Golden Corral. But here's the deal: Not only did they talk to each other, it seemed like they talked to everybody else — mostly about family, people known in common, maybe what was on the news, but also about cooking, flowers, furniture refinishing, family history, family stories, gardening, misbehavior and more family stories. I think they automatically saw strangers as interesting.

That talk from the women in my family gave me a grounding I didn't recognize, a grounding I didn't feel in full until adulthood. Recently, I have realized that this talk was, in a sense, important and precious.

With them, I'd walk up to a young man tending the vegetable section at the grocery store. "Oh, my goodness," my mother or an aunt would say to the young man, "these tomatoes look almost good enough to buy. What's your name?"

"Robert."

"Robert what?"

"Robert Wright."

"The Lowe's Grove Wrights or the Oak Grove Wrights?"

"Oak Grove."

"I'll bet you know Harvey, Dudley's son."

"Yes, ma'am. He's my uncle."

"No! Really? I haven't seen him in six or eight years. Did his eyes ever get OK?"

"Oh, yes ma'am. They're all healed up now."

"[To another aunt] Didn't Mildred used to date him?"

"No. She dated Simon. Robert, you have an Uncle Simon?"

"Yes, ma'am. He was in here yesterday."

And so on.

I'd be standing there. "Clyde," my mother would say, "this nice man takes care of the vegetables."

I grew up believing that it was OK to approach people and ask them questions, to have faith that people would more likely answer than turn back to the tomatoes.

I'm glad that as a child I spent a lot of time with these women in my family and that I wasn't raised mainly by men who didn't talk much. Because as in so many things, how you start out eventually comes back to either comfort or haunt you. And more and more I see the advantages of looking into another person's face, say, sitting or standing across from me, and surfing the channels of info behind their eyes, info that's likely to come to me in words. It's great research for writing novels, for learning about how things work — whatever the topic might be. There is meaning in such talk. Meaning found beneath and beyond the words. Such talk is somehow connected to the way we ought to be — approaching each other, without fear, just to talk a little bit.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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